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ABSTRACT

The Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in response to Texas House Bill 72 (1984), which mandated a new basic skills assessment program for mathematics, reading, and writing at grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. This document is one in a series of Instructional Strategies Guides designed to familiarize Texas educators with the types of strategies employed in assessing learner mastery of TEAMS objectives and to provide suggested instructional activities that can be used to promote mastery of those objectives. This manual focuses on the TEAMS objectives for written composition for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9. The purpose of the composition requirement is to give students the opportunity to use the language skills they are taught. Three purposes of written communication (persuasive, informative, and expressive) and three modes or methods of achieving those purposes (narrative, descriptive and classificatory) are identified as appropriate for measurement on the TEAMS tests. The six composition objectives are described. The manual also includes scoring guides with writing samples for informative/descriptive writing, and expressive/narrative writing at the elementary level; and informative/classificatory writing, and persuasive/descriptive writing at the secondary level. Instructional strategies and suggested activities for the written composition objectives for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 are included. (JAZ)

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TEAMS

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

GRADES 3, 5, 7, AND 9

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August 1986

TEAMS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

GRADES 3, 5, 7, AND 9

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INTRODUCTION

During 1980-1985 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administered a criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS). That program was designed to measure minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 3, 5, and 9. In July 1984, under the provisions of House Bill 72, a new basic skills assessment program was mandated in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. In response, development of the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was instituted by TEA during the 1985-1986 school year.

School district personnel from across Texas participated in all aspects of the development of TEAMS. Basic skills objectives were selected after a thorough review of the State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum, GE4 450 01 (Essential Elements). Under TEA supervision measurement specifications and test items were developed for each objective. Statewide field testing was conducted to ensure the quality of test items. The State Board of Education then approved the TEAMS tests for administration.

Because of the significance of the TEAMS program, TEA is providing Texas educators with instructional strategies guides for all objectives measured on each TEAMS examination. These guides describe the TEAMS objectives as well as instructional considerations and activities that can be used to promote mastery of TEAMS objectives.

This instructional strategies guide focuses on the TEAMS objectives for written composition. It provides a detailed description of the test items used to measure each objective. In addition, a brief instructional emphases section is provided for each objective as are instructional activities that can help students master the objective.

Texas educators will undoubtedly vary in the ways they wish to promote learner mastery of the TEAMS objectives. Thus, the instructional components of this guide are not intended to be prescriptive. Teachers should view suggested activities as potential approaches that lead to mastery of the TEAMS objectives.

PART I

PURPOSE/MODE

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. This purpose may be achieved through various methods or modes of organization. Three purposes and three modes or methods of reaching a purpose have been identified as appropriate for measurement on the TEAMS tests. These include:

Purpose

- Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.
- Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.
- Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence a particular audience. However, one purpose is generally primary with others subordinate to the main purpose. In the TEAMS tests, written composition items are designed to focus, as much as possible, on a single purpose which is stated or implied in the prompt.

Mode

- Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.
- Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and qualities of an idea or object.
- Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.

While each of these modes can be identified clearly, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of TEAMS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so they will use that method of organization in their responses. This model for written composition was adapted from James L. Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971.

Each TEAMS writing task calls for a particular combination of purpose and mode. The application of a scoring guide which is specific to a particular purpose/mode permits consistency in scoring voluminous student responses. One should recognize that in everyday writing, purposes and modes overlap. The classroom writing program should not be limited to TEAMS-like writing assignments.

AUDIENCE

In conjunction with the idea of writing for a particular purpose is the concept of writing for a specific audience. As one varies his/her writing to fit a particular purpose, one varies his/her writing to address a designated audience.

In all cases on the TEAMS tests, the audience is specified in the prompt. Students taking the TEAMS tests at Grades 5, 7, and 9 are expected to respond to a specified audience in writing their compositions.

Audiences may be classified as formal (e.g., a principal, the mayor, a school board member, a newspaper editor) or informal (e.g., a friend or classmate). An issue, such as dropping out of school, would be addressed in different ways if one were writing a letter to a friend attempting to persuade him/her not to drop out or if one were writing to a school board member convincing him/her that the local high school had a drop-out problem.

ELABORATION

An essential component of good writing is the effective use of elaboration, through which a writer expands the composition with the use of detail. Elaboration may be achieved in many ways such as the use of:

* action words (verbs)
* adjectives
* adverbs
* analogies
* comparison
* conversation
* description
* examples
* figurative language
* metaphors
* personification
* quotations
* sensory images
* similes
* superlatives (adjectives)

Regardless of the purpose and mode of writing assessed on the TEAMS written composition, elaboration throughout the response must be present for students to attain scores of "3" or "4."

Elaboration of ideas differs from the extension of ideas in quality and degree - elaboration is better than extension. A detail is extended when the writer links an additional piece of information to the detail, e.g., "I want to go to Australia because they have lots of different animals (extension) like kangaroos, giraffes, and koala bears." A detail is elaborated when the writer links several pieces of information to the detail.

> "I want to go to Australia because they have lots of different animals like kangaroos, giraffes, and koala bears. It would be fun to see these animals and how they live. Because of these animals, Australia produces a lot of fur rugs and coats and I'd like to have a kangaroo rug."

Linking information is only one way a writer can elaborate. Another way to elaborate is through description.

> "Rollercoasters are fun to ride when they go up, you can look all around the whole fair. When they go down, your stomach feels like it is in your throat and this is exciting."

Cause and effect can also be used for elaboration.

> "I want to go to the beach. The beach is pretty with its white sand. You can build sand castles, then watch the tide come in and wash the castles away leaving shells behind to collect and take home to show your friends."

As long as the writer is clearly linking the additional information to the detail, elaboration is taking place. However, many writers add information but do not link the information to the detail or to the purpose for writing, e.g., "I want to go to Australia because they have lots of different animals like kangaroos, etc. Australia is a major producer." The second sentence does not clearly link to the idea of different animals; consequently, that sentence would be considered another reason for going to Australia. If the writer had continued in that vein, e.g., "Australia is a continent. It has very few people. It is big." without any link back to the purpose for writing (why you want to go there), then it is considered an "all I know about" paper and the writer is not given credit for either reasons or elaboration.*

Thus, to be effective, elaboration must be precise and pertinent to the point being elaborated. Instructional strategies for teaching elaboration have been included in this guide.

* Adapted from materials developed by Wendy Littlefair, Measurement, Inc., Durham, N.C.

TEAMS OBJECTIVES FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION

The TEAMS tests for Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 include a written composition component. The purpose of this requirement is to give students an opportunity to use the language skills they are taught. Writing is a discipline which enables one to synthesize smaller steps of instruction. It helps one to organize his/her thoughts, to select, combine, arrange, and develop ideas and to arrive at a solution, a decision, or a conclusion. By including a written composition requirement, TEAMS encourages teachers to help their students to improve their ability to think and reason clearly, to advance their thinking from simple to complex ideas, and to express themselves in written form. Many language specialists contend that learning to write is one of the most difficult yet probably one of the most important things a child does. The TEAMS test helps to assure that all students attending the Texas public schools will receive instruction in effective writing skills.

As stated in the TEA publication, "Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications," each year ONE of the written composition objectives will be tested at each of the appropriate grade levels. Objectives indicating the type of composition eligible for testing at each grade level are listed on the next page.

OBJECTIVES FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION COMPONENT OF TEAMS TESTS

GRADE 3

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.

Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Objective 9: Write a narrative on a specified topic.

GRADE 5

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.

Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Objective 9: Write a narrative on a specified topic.

Objective 10: Write a composition in which two or more ideas/objects/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.

Objective 11: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.

GRADE 7

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.

Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Objective 9: Write a composition which explains the likenesses and differences or the advantages and disadvantages of two simple ideas/objects/places.

Objective 10: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.

GRADE 9

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.

Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Objective 9: Write a composition in which two or more ideas/objects/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.

Objective 10: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.

Objective 11: Write a composition which discusses two opposing courses of action and is designed to convince a specified audience to follow one of those courses.

DESCRIPTIONS OF OBJECTIVES

Each of the purpose/mode combinations eligible for testing on TEAMS is described below:

Write a composition to describe an object or picture.

This objective measures informative/descriptive writing. Students are asked to describe the attributes of a specified item or picture for a specified audience (if applicable). The writer is expected to focus on that item or picture and present a vivid description of it. The extent to which this description enables the reader to envision the item being described determines the degree of rhetorical success. The description should be specific and elaborated. The writer should describe a lengthy set of features elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail. The response should be consistent in its organizational strategy. Usually the writer will select one feature and describe it fully before moving on to another feature. In most cases, the writer will include the locations of features described and will delineate the relationship of one feature to another. The writer may frame the description with narration or interject expressive elements, but these elements must enhance the description rather than detract from it.

The stimulus or prompt may present a familiar object (e.g., the student's classroom) or a picture to be described. The picture may be either a single object or a scene and may be either fanciful or realistic. The specified audience (if applicable) will be appropriate school personnel, other adults, a classmate, a friend, or "someone else." Key words in the prompt which will indicate that informative/descriptive writing is required are "describe" or "tell what you see."

Write a composition to tell how to do something.

This objective measures informative/narrative writing. Students are asked to refer to a specified task and to relate the steps by which this task may be accomplished in a logical, sequential manner for a specified audience (if applicable). The criteria for rhetorical effectiveness will focus on whether a reader could replicate each step of the task as explained in the composition. Each step presented should be unambiguous, specific, and elaborated. The response should be consistent in its organizational strategy. Usually the writer will describe fully each step before moving on to another step.

The prompt will ask students to tell how to do something. The prompt may be presented as a familiar process to be explained or as a pictorial stimulus consisting of a scene, a single object, or a series of pictures. Key words in the prompt which will indicate that informative/narrative writing is required are "tell how to."

Write a narrative on a specified topic.

This objective measures expressive/narrative writing. Students are asked to make up a story and relate it in a sequential manner to a specified audience (if applicable). To meet the criteria for rhetorical success, the stories must focus on the topic, and they must be well-organized and easy to follow, containing no gaps in the story line. The story should follow the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer should not make abrupt, confusing shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer will handle these in a clear, effective manner. The narrative should have a clear sense of beginning and ending and should include rich details which embellish the unfolding events and a varied choice of words. Description should be vivid and extensive and should help the reader to visualize the events of the story.

The prompt will ask students to write a story by specifying a story scenario or by including a pictorial stimulus. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a scene or a single object and it will be either fanciful or realistic. A story starter may be included in the prompt. The specified audience (if applicable) will be the teacher, a classmate, or "someone else." Key words in the prompt which will indicate that expressive/narrative writing is required are "write a story about."

Write a composition in which two or more ideas/objects/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.

This objective measures informative/classificatory writing. Students are asked to refer to ideas, objects, or places presented in the prompt and to group their attributes or characteristics for a specified audience (if applicable) through processes such as defining or comparing and contrasting. Rhetorical effectiveness is gauged by how well the writer has organized the categories or definitions and how clearly they can be understood by the reader. Information presented should be specific, elaborated, and classified in a logical way. The response should be consistent in its organizational strategy. Relationships between the ideas delineated should be clear. The response should remain on topic from beginning to end. When personal anecdotes or other rhetorical devices are used, they should enhance the response.

The stimulus will ask the student to classify two or more ideas/objects/places by specifying those ideas/objects/places to be discussed or by presenting a picture. If a pictorial stimulus is included, it will consist of a set of familiar objects/places that are to be classified. The specified audience will be appropriate school personnel, other adults, a classmate, a friend, or "someone else." Key words in the prompt which will indicate that informative/classificatory writing is required are "tell what is good and bad," "compare and contrast," or "give advantages and disadvantages."

Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.

This objective measures persuasive/descriptive writing. Students are asked to make a choice among the options presented and provide reasons for the choice that would convince a specified audience. The criterion for rhetorical success is the degree to which the reader is convinced by the writer's argument. The response should contain sufficient elaboration of reasons to make them understood clearly and to be convincing in support of the writer's stated choice. The response should contain a clear sense of order and completeness as evidenced by effective use of introductory, transitional, and concluding elements and highly effective word choice.

The prompt will ask the student to make a choice and present convincing reasons for the choice to a specified audience. The prompt may state options among which a choice must be made or may include a pictorial stimulus. If the latter is used, it will consist of a scene, a single object, or a series of pictures. The specified audience will be appropriate school personnel, other adults, a classmate, a friend, or "someone else." Key words in the prompt which will indicate that persuasive/descriptive writing is required are "make a choice," "for or against," "agree or disagree," "convince," or "give convincing reasons."

Write a composition which discusses two opposing courses of action and is designed to convince a specified audience to follow one of those courses.

This objective measures persuasive/classificatory writing. Students are asked to discuss two opposing courses of action and to convince a specified audience to follow one of these courses. The criterion for rhetorical success is the degree to which the writer's argument convinces the reader. In the response two alternate courses of action should be discussed and convincing reasons for choosing one of these courses of action should be presented to a specified audience. The response should be consistent in its organizational strategy. Relationships among the ideas delineated should be clear, information presented should be specific and elaborated, and the persuasive tone of the response should be apparent.

The prompt will ask the student to discuss two opposing courses of action and to convince a specified audience to follow one of these courses. The specified audience will be appropriate school personnel, other adults, a classmate, a friend, or "someone else." Key words in the prompt which indicate that persuasive/classificatory writing is required are "discuss both courses of action," "choose a position," and "give convincing reasons."

Examples of Purpose/Mode Combinations

Though a wide range of topics can be used to elicit writing from students, the combination of a particular purpose with a specific mode or method for reaching the purpose will cause both writing prompts and students' responses to vary.

One way a writer might persuade is through description:

"Your city plans to build a new, large, international airport on its outskirts. In an editorial to your local newspaper, describe how the airport might add to the city's aesthetic appeal. Convince the readers that the airport is needed to beautify your city."

For this composition, the writer must keep in mind that the purpose of the editorial is to convince readers (persuasion). The manner in which he/she will persuade should be descriptive. Description gives a visual image, or it explains reasons. And, although the writer must choose the order in which elements will be presented, description does not include sequencing.

Another way a writer could persuade is by classification:

> "Your local airport has become too crowded. The airport, which is very close to the city, can be remodeled to meet minimum safety standards, or a new safer airport can be built 10 miles from town. In an editorial to your local newspaper, discuss both courses of action, choose a position, and convince readers of your position."

Again the persuasive purpose is required. In this instance, however, the writer will use the classificatory mode to explain the advantages and disadvantages of both options. The writer's position must be made clear. In classification, the writer may appeal to the intellect or to the emotions of the reader. Consequently, the writer needs to state the advantages and disadvantages of building a new airport 10 miles from town as well as the advantages and disadvantages of remodeling the existing airport and then explicitly state his/her position, convincing readers that it is the one that should be preferred. In this persuasive/classificatory composition, the purpose is, once again, to persuade. Yet the classificatory mode makes the writing product different from that of the descriptive mode.

A third example of how mode affects the composition may be shown through persuasive narration. (This type of writing is not tested by TEAMS; nevertheless, an example of this type is useful to help distinguish among the different types of writing):

> "Your city plans to build a new, large, international airport on its outskirts. In an editorial to your local newspaper, tell about the events which led to this need and why the city should pursue its plans."

A persuasive narrative must convince its readers to pursue the proposed plan (persuasive). This prompt indicates that this must be accomplished through narration, or a sequencing of events. Thus, the writer may tell about the first airport in the city, how and why it grew, and what makes it ineffective today. While narrating, the writer must keep in mind that his/her purpose is to persuade readers.

The three examples of purpose/mode combinations have a common element, to persuade, yet each differs in its resultant form of writing.

Although students must respond appropriately to the purpose and mode of the writing stimulus on the TEAMS test, it is not important that they be able to name the types of writing described in this document because the stimulus is worded to elicit the type of writing required. What is important, however, in teaching writing is that students learn how to organize and express ideas better. As students experience a variety of writing tasks, they become aware of the different purposes and audiences for writing and are more attuned to adapting their responses to meet those demands.

PURPOSES AND MODES OF WRITING

MEASURED ON TEAMS

GRADE 3

Objective 7: Informative Descriptive
Objective 8: Informative Narrative
Objective 9: Expressive Narrative

GRADE 5

Objective 7: Informative Descriptive
Objective 8: Informative Narrative
Objective 9: Expressive Narrative
Objective 10: Informative Classificatory
Objective 11: Persuasive Descriptive

GRADE 7

Objective 7: Informative Descriptive
Objective 8: Informative Narrative
Objective 9: Informative Classificatory
Objective 10: Persuasive Descriptive

GRADE 9

Objective 7: Informative Descriptive
Objective 8: Informative Narrative
Objective 9: Informative Classificatory
Objective 10: Persuasive Descriptive
Objective 11: Persuasive Classificatory

PART II

Scoring the TEAMS Written Compositions

A process called focused holistic scoring has been developed to assess the written composition component of the TEAMS tests for students in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9.

Approximately 140 qualified readers at each grade level are employed annually to score the 1.1 million TEAMS written compositions. Readers must have at least a bachelor's degree in English, journalism, education, or a related field. In addition, they must have teaching experience or other qualifying experience with children or in the assessment of writing.

This written composition portion of the TEAMS test requires the student to organize ideas in writing for a particular purpose (expressive, informative, or persuasive) and in a particular mode (narrative, descriptive, or classificatory). This first-draft composition is then evaluated holistically by at least two independent readers and given a score ranging from zero to four. The scoring process is called focused holistic scoring, because the criterion for assigning the score is the degree to which the paper organizes ideas for a specified purpose and audience/task. Since this is a statewide test, stimuli to which students must respond are selected carefully and field tested to ensure that they are appropriate to the age, interests, and experiences of all the students to be tested.

Once a stimulus is selected for TEAMS, scoring guides are prepared which describe characteristics of papers at each score level. "0" papers, for example, do not address the task at all. "1" papers attempt to address the task, but fail to do so acceptably. "2" papers are minimally successful, "3" papers moderately so, and "4" papers successful. Specific characteristics of papers at each scoring level are drawn up in detail, so that there can be as little doubt as possible what score a given paper should receive.

It should be recognized that in the ordinary classroom atmosphere students who engage in the composing process have a broad range of options that the testing situation cannot provide. Prewriting activities, for example, can be done in a group with a wealth of materials, and may extend over a long period of time. In the test situation the student has no contact with others, can use only pencil and paper, and must produce a specified piece of writing at one sitting.

Nevertheless, the students who are experienced in the frequent use of the composing process will be far more at ease in the test situation. These students will be better able to apply the skills of organizing ideas for a purpose and making appropriate language choices than students who never or rarely engage in the process.

TEAMS

TEXAS EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
OF MINIMUM SKILLS

Scoring Guide

For Informative/Descriptive Writing at the Elementary Level

Texas Education Agency
Division of Student Assessment

Introduction

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. This purpose may be achieved through various methods or modes of organization.* Three purposes and three modes have been identified as appropriate for measurement on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests. These include:

Purpose

- o Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.
- o Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.
- o Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence an audience. However, one purpose is generally primary with others subordinate to the main purpose. In the TEAMS tests, written composition items are designed to focus as much as possible on a single purpose which is clearly stated or implied in the item.

Mode

- o Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.
- o Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and qualities of an idea or object.
- o Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.

While each of these modes can be identified clearly, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of TEAMS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so they will use that method of organization in their responses.

* Adapted from James L. Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Scoring the Written Compositions

A process called "focused holistic scoring" has been developed to assess the TEAMS written compositions. The scoring system is "holistic" because the total piece of writing is considered. It is "focused" because the writing is evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- Organize ideas in writing
- Respond appropriately to the purpose and audience (if applicable) or task of a given writing situation.

Since the responses elicited in TEAMS are first-draft compositions, problems with writing mechanics, such as punctuation and spelling, are considered only if they are so serious that they interfere with the communication of the writer's ideas. The scoring criteria take into account the student's developmental capabilities and the constraints of the testing situation.

Each composition is scored independently by two trained readers who assign the paper a score of 0 (low) to 4 (high). If the two scores do not match, the paper is given to a third reader, who also evaluates the response independently. If the third score matches one of the previously assigned scores, this matched score becomes the paper's score. If the third score does not match either of the other two, the paper is given to the scoring director for resolution.

Experience for Young Writers

Many elementary school age students struggle with the conventions of writing. Because ideas occur to them more rapidly than they can be transcribed, it is common to find words omitted or words and phrases repeated. An individual who has had experience with children of this age can read through minor difficulties to focus on the more serious problems of poor organization of ideas or rambling off the topic. Certain behaviors are appropriate developmentally for young writers, and these should be distinguished from those which indicate that the writer has not acquired the fundamental skills of putting thoughts into writing. A student's ideas must be considered as they are actually presented on paper. It is not appropriate to guess at a student's intended thoughts.

Some areas with which young writers struggle are:

> Spelling - Students progress through various stages as they learn to spell the thousands of words in their oral vocabularies. Some children progress more slowly than others through the stages of learning to spell. Some papers contain numerous errors while others are virtually free of errors. Individuals who have worked with elementary school students generally find it easy to decipher nonstandard spellings, since attempts to spell usually reflect both an underlying knowledge of phonology and knowledge of what has been learned up to this point about the orthographic

representation of sounds. The students' scores will be affected if numerous errors in basic, familiar words occur. However, if nonstandard spelling of more complex words can be deciphered and the flow of words makes sense to the reader, the score on the written composition will not be affected.

Attempts at Writing Dialogue - Frequently young writers will include dialogue in their responses, but few elementary school students have learned the conventions of marking dialogue. Though students will not use dialogue to a great extent with items requiring informative/descriptive writing, some students will use dialogue regardless. Occasionally, an entire response will be written as dialogue, often without the benefit of dialogue markers. These papers are usually more difficult to read and may have to be reread several times before the message becomes clear. A paper can appear confusing, but if mental dialogue markers are inserted, the writer's meaning may become clear. The extent to which the meaning has been communicated after mental markers have been added determines the success of a paper of this type. Young writers should not be penalized for their attempts at engaging in written conversation unless the flow of ideas is so confusing that communication is impaired.

Punctuation - Young writers should not be expected to use all of the different punctuation marks accurately and should not be penalized for omitting them or for attempting to use a particular mark and using it incorrectly.

Run-on Sentences - Students in the elementary grades have a tendency to write run-on sentences using the conjunctions "and" or "but." The written composition score should not be affected if a student writes long sentences.

Writing Stories - Many young writers write stories even if the task at hand is descriptive. Frequently, well-written papers will contain clear, specific description embedded within a narrative frame. As long as adequate description is included in the response, it is eligible for at least a minimally successful score.

Constraints of the Testing Situations - When scoring student responses, readers take into account the constraints of the testing situation. Students are asked to produce a composition without the benefit of prewriting activities such as class discussion and teacher-directed activities. These factors are especially important for young writers, since they impose conditions on the student which are different from the instructional setting for writing. In instructional situations there is generally a great deal of interaction with the teacher about what to write, how to say it, how to spell words, and how to punctuate sentences. Writing as part of a test is, in most cases, an unfamiliar activity for many elementary school age children. Though students are permitted to organize their thoughts and to make notes before they begin to write, they may not recopy their compositions. The compositions are scored as "first-draft" attempts.

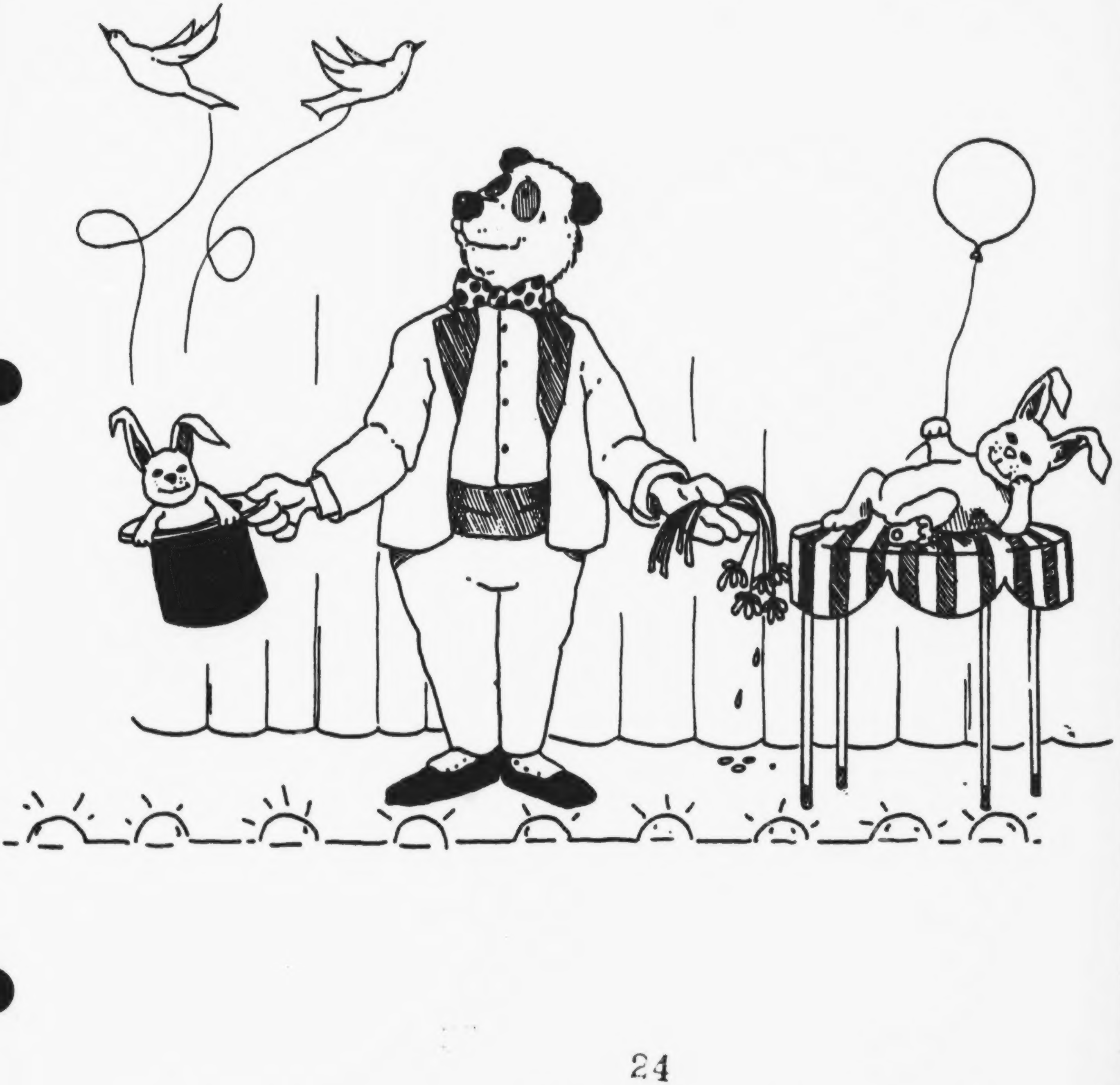
Descriptions of Score Points and Sample Papers

As specified in Subchapter O, Chapter 21, Section 21.556 of the Texas Education Code "...the State Board of Education...shall insure the security of the instruments..." Though the TEAMS written composition items must remain secure, the item included in this publication is similar in difficulty and format to TEAMS items designed to elicit informative/descriptive writing from elementary school students.

The papers presented are actual student responses to the item collected during a recent field test. These samples are typical of the types of papers third graders write in the actual TEAMS testing situation.

SAMPLE ITEM

This is a picture of a bear that's dressed as a magician. Look at this picture and describe what you see.



SCORE POINT 1

1 = **PAPERS THAT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC BUT MERELY PAINT A GENERAL AND VAGUE PICTURE IN THE READER'S MIND. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- o Responses that are informative/descriptive but are unsuccessful in their presentation. These papers include:
  - oo Papers that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.
  - oo Responses that are so sparse that the reader is able to obtain only a vague impression of the bear scene.
  - oo Responses that are lists of words or phrases.
  - oo Responses that contain no more than a brief unelaborated description of the bear scene.
  - oo Responses that contain elaboration but the elaboration is mainly nonspecific.
- o Responses that attend very briefly to the task but they do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment very briefly and then switch to another topic altogether.
- o Responses that exhibit a lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired. Responses that fall into this category are difficult to decipher because of confused syntax or extensive misspellings. Syntax is confused when words are not arranged in a logical order. The reader can only guess at the writer's intent, and it is not appropriate for a reader to make such inferences. The reader should attempt to figure out misspelled words. However, if the quantity of misspelled words is great and the words being used are basic, the response should receive a "1."
- o Responses that are poorly organized or contain gaps. These papers are so poorly organized that the reader is unable to discern a strategy. This may be caused by repetition, major gaps, or excessive rambling.
- o Responses that are narrative that mention the bear scene but do not contain sufficient description.

SAMPLE A

I saw tow birds, tow raebts, one Bear, a blowne, nine people, flowers, tow sixes, a sute, a tie, a hat, shoes, pants and shirt, a belt, a table, water, a waler, a cearten, a plower,

SCORE: 1

The writer has included only an unelaborated list of features about the scene.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE B

I saw A bear in a program in the t.V. .
And that bear did know Magic like athers Men.
like Me When I grow up I am going to be,
like ather Men and like My father pretty and.
brave Am Drawng Any speik Magician and kids.
Know how to do Magician.
balloons I cant somhow without a
pin pader of balloons.
the bear looks pretty he is with hat 2 rabits and.
a balloon 2 birds and he is in a program .
and he is doing Magician.

SCORE: 1

The writer strays from the topic then returns with a bare list of words describing the scene. The reader obtains only a bare picture of the scene.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The Magician Bear

I saw a magicia bear with a bird.
The bear was funy. It was big.
The flowers died. without water.
And two rabbets are helping.

SCORE: 1

The response contains only a brief description of the scene. The reader obtains only a vague picture of the scene.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

I see a bear.
A Rabbit in a pan.
I see a bear on a stage.
I see a Rabbit on a table
I see two birds.

SCORE: 1

Although the writer is on topic, this response is so sparse that the reader is able to obtain a vague impression of the scene.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The bear is mean and the rabit inthe hat isto. He boaght ugly flowes so the oduns would go back home. Hewent to the Store and stold some bananas. The ploese tryed to coach him but didnt. Hewent to find the birds but the birds went away. Some times he thing no one liked him but the peole did like him. Thay liked his funny joks and him when he was not Claumbey

SCORE: 1

This writer mentions the bear and other features of the scene but writes a narrative about the bear instead of describing the bear. Though most of the invented spellings such as "ploese" and "peole" are recognizable, several others such as "oduns" and "claumbey" do impair meaning.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 2

2 = PAPERS WHICH RESPOND TO THE TASK WITH SOMEWHAT ELABORATED DESCRIPTIONS. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Responses that contain somewhat elaborated descriptions of the bear scene. These responses contain specific descriptive details. Some of these responses are lengthy lists of sentences that contain elaborated descriptive details.

- Responses that include a substantial amount of non-descriptive writing. These responses include a somewhat elaborated description of the picture, but the description is embedded in a narrative. The extraneous material does not assist in painting a clearer picture of the scene in the reader's mind, though some of these responses may be well written.

- Responses in which gaps and/or repetitions occur in organization. In these responses the writer may describe a feature, drop it and describe another feature, then return to the first feature with additional description.

- Responses characterized by limited control of written language. These responses may contain awkward, repetitious, or simplistic sentence structure. The word choice may be limited and errors in usage may occur.

SAMPLE F

In this picture I see a ribit and tus birds and a blouns and a table. And there is a ribet on the table. There is a muchish in the picture. There is a hat and some flowers. And behind them there is a cround. And the bare has on a bowtie. And there is some pintes on the bare. And he has a black nose. And a smil face. And there is some bounts on his stere. There is water driping from the flowers. And on the birds tails there is two strings. And in frount of thim there is lits on the flor. And on the table there is a tablecoth. And the lits are shine. And in the bares eye there is lines. And on his iter is lines. And he has a vest on. And black shols on. And wite pants on And a black bowtie on. And there is lines on the corets. And on the tablecold there is balck and with lines on it. And there is water on the fore. And in the black hat there is a ritas. And the bare has a black thing around him

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

And there is a string on the blowns. And the rites has a wite nose. And wite eres.

SCORE: 2

Though lengthy, this response is list-like. The writer demonstrates a limited control of language. Sentence structure is simplistic and repetitious. Some spellings are unrecognizable.

STOP

SAMPLE G

I see two birds, I see a rabbit in a hat.

I see a rabbit on a table.

And the magician is holding some flowers.

One rabbit is holding a baloon. The magician has on a bow tie? I see some lights on the stage and a curtain.

SCORE: 2

This response contains a sketchy description of the scene somewhat elaborated through the use of location. Sentence structure is simplistic.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE H

I see a rabbit in the Bear hat.
He is looKing at the birds.
THE Bunny is ling on the table.
The Bear got on a BlacK and white bow
The Bear, is got BlacK ears.
The Bear is got on a BlacK and white SU
He got BlacK shoe on.
He got White sock On.
He is the starge man I ever seen
It got a BlacK nose.
I see the light Under his feet

SCORE: 2

This response contains a description of the scene somewhat elaborated through location and color; however, organization is weak.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

3 = THESE PAPERS REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT DESCRIBING THE BEAR SCENE. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Descriptions that are moderately well elaborated. Elaboration may be accomplished in several ways:
    - By describing in detail a small set of features. The writer may select a small number of features and write about each in detail.
    - By presenting a moderately well elaborated description of a large number of features. This elaboration may be achieved by locating the features in relation to each other or by using specific or figurative language, including metaphors or similes.
- Responses that contain a wealth of elaborated details but have no apparent organizational strategy. The details presented in these responses, however, are not contradictory.
- Responses that are only somewhat elaborated but are well organized. These responses present an overall description of the scene.
- Responses that exhibit a control of written language characterized by clarity of expression and effective word choice.

SAMPLE I

The bear Magician

The bear has dead flowers in h hand. He also has a pocket doted tie. His eyes are looking at two birds a flyi in the air. He has a smile on his face The rabbite that is holding a balloon is laying down on a table. There is a rabbite that is in a hat his paws are hamging down on the bears hat he is also smileing and one of his ears is creke the other one looks funny.

The bear magician is wearing a black belt. The bear looks like he has some glouvs that are white. Ther are dripi water on the flour. The table has strip on it the carlar is black and white. One bird is going right and the other one is going left. The birds als are makeing circuls and lines. At the bortum of his feet there are nine lights on stage. The bear is black and white. The balloon is also big and white with a black string. The bear has a whie shirt and a white outlined coat. The bea has lots of fur on him. His ears

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

are black also. It looks like on hi's pants there are black and white stiped pockets.

SCORE: 3

The response is well elaborated through the use of location and precise vocabulary. However, its organizational strategy is not consistent because the writer often returns to features previously described to add information.

STOP

SAMPLE J

The Magician

The magician is a Bear. The magician's name is Tommy . Tommy has a hat with a rabbit inside it. The hat is black. There are two birds up in the air. The magician has a pockadot tie under his neck. He is watching the two birds . Tommy the magician has on black shoes and with a white tung. There is a other rabbit on a table holding a baloon in its hand . Tommy has flowers in his has and they are deid. TOmmy has on a white suit and write pants. He is smileing at the birds. He has a black belt on . The two rabbits seem happy today. The baloon is small with a little string on it. The birds are flying in the air. One bird is flying left. The other bird is flying right. The two birds are white. The baloon is white. And the table has four legs. The magician and the two rabbits are up on stadge.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE J cont.

SCORE: 3

The writer uses specific vocabulary giving an overall picture of the scene but returns frequently to features previously described.

STOP

SAMPLE K

There are two dove flying around The magician is looking up at the dove. The magician has little ears. He has big eyes. He has a big nose. The bear has a nice smile. The magician has a doted bow on his collor. He has a jacket on. The magician has a rabbit in his hat in the right hand in the left hand he has flowers. The magician is wearing some trowsers. He is wearing some kind of shoes There are lights shining on. the magician. On the left side of the magician is a rabbit holding a balloon. The rabbit is laying on the table. On the tables is a table cloth. The table has four long legs. It looks like the tables legs fold up. There are lights shining on the rabbit.

SCORE: 3

The response is moderately well elaborated, and an organizational strategy is apparent. Only some word choice is specific.

SAMPLE L

There is two doves flying around, over the bear's head. They are carrying ribbons. In the middle of the picture there is a bear acting as a magician. And next to him is a rabbit holding a balloon.

The background is curtains. Being held in the bears right hand is a hat with a rabbit in it. Now in the bears left hand there is five flowers dripping water on the stage. Next I see a table with the rabbit laying on it. That table has nine-teen stripes on it. The bear is wearing a tuxedo. Then, on stage there is nine lights all blinking together.

SCORE: 3

This response is moderately well organized and contains an apparent spatial strategy. In addition, it is moderately well elaborated through specific word choice such as "wearing a tuxedo" and "carrying ribbons."

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE M

One day I went to see a magic show. The magician was a bear. He had a small head He had two big eyes and nose. His mouth looked suprised. He had on a tie with pock-a-dots on it. He had on a shirt on with four buttons on it. He also had on a jacket. He had two long arms. In one hand he was holdind a top hat with a rabbit in it. In the other hand he had some dead flowers. He had on some pants. He also had on some shoes. He was standing on a stage. In frount of him were some lights. On the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

right of him was a table with a striped top. On top of the top was a rabbit holding a balloon. The magic show was exsiting.

The End

SCORE: 3

The response is well organized with a clear organizational strategy. containing no repetitions. The writer includes both beginning and ending statements. However, the response is only moderately well developed. Details are not expanded and some word choice is imprecise.

STOP

SAMPLE N

One day I saw a bear. He was
dressed like a magicians.
He had on a tie that
was spoted. He was holding
flowers in his hand. On the
right hand side of him
was table with a lined
table clothe and a bunny
with a balloon on top.
On the left hand side
of the bear he was holding
a hat. In the hat was
a bunny. The bunny had
long ears. Also on the left
of the bear in the air
was to doves. They
had strings tied to there
tail and they were flying
away. The bear was on
a big stadge. There were
9 little lights on the
stadge. There were curtens
at the back of the stadge
too.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

There was water dripping from each flower, After the show I went home

SCORE: 3

This response is moderately well elaborated through location, and an organizational strategy is apparent.

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = PAPERS AT THIS LEVEL ARE CONSISTENT, WELL ORGANIZED, AND WELL ELABORATED INFORMATIVE DESCRIPTIONS. THESE RESPONSES ARE UNIFIED AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. RESPONSES IN THE "4" CATEGORY WILL INCLUDE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES:

- A description that is specific and elaborated. Generally the writer will describe a lengthy set of features elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail.
- A response that uses sophisticated syntactic constructions. The writer uses these constructions to paint a vivid picture of the bear scene in the mind of the reader. Though the writer may not incorporate the appropriate conventions of punctuation and capitalization for these constructions, these attempts enhance the effectiveness of the response.
- A response that has an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent.
    - The writer may select one feature of the response and describe it fully before moving on to another feature.
    - The writer may include the locations of the objects described and the relationship of one object to another.
    - The writer may frame the descriptive with narrative or interject expressive elements, but these enhance the description rather than detract from it.

One day I went to a magic show. There was a bear doing magic tricks In one hand he had a hat. Coming out out of the hat was a little bunny. He had a cute, little, puffy face. His eyes were little, round and sparkleing. His nose was sniffing the nice air. His mouth had a happy, proud smile on it. Two arm were sticking out too. Right up above the cute bunny were two birds. They were beeutiful birds. They were chirping a soft, little song. To the right of them there was the bear himself. He had two, small ears that heard everthing. He had two big eyes that could see everthing too. He had a big nose that stuck out. He had a tiny grin on his face. His tie had dots on it and it was very stright. He had a very hansome suit on It had a nice vest whith little cuffs at the end of it. In his other hand there were some dead flowers that were dripping water. He had a very different kind of shirt. It had four big buttons going down the front of it. He had some, long pants on that barley stayed up. His socks were very clean. His shoes were tap dance shoes. Next to him was a tall

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

table with four long leg and a table cloth. On the table was a bunny. The bunny had long ears. His face was boncy and his eyes glemed. His nose was very small and it twiched now and then. He had a very big body and all four of his paws were sticking up. He was holding a balloon with writing on it. It said "SMILE" in very big letters. On the stage lights were shining up on the bear. It was very exsiting day for me. When I got home I went to bed it was a very long night.

The End

STOP

SCORE: 4

The response is unified and easy to read. The writer's choice of words such as "chirping a soft, little song" and "twiched now and then" paints a vivid picture of the scene in the mind of the reader.

I went to a magic show last week. There was a panda bear dressed in a magian suit. He had black ears, white face, and a black nose. Around his neck he had a poko-dot tie. He had a shirt that was buttoned. He had coat with a collar on it. Each of his hand were holding something. In one a top hat with a rabbit in it. In the other he was holding flowers. His pance were high waters and had a big belt holding them up. His shoes were narrow and had buttons on them. To his side there was a table it had four legs and and a striped table cloth with a rabbit laying on it the rabbit was holding a ballon. The ballon was full of air that I thought it would burst in the rabbit's hand.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Above him two birds flew with strings trailing them. The curtains were closed behind him and the stage was lighted. We watched a couple tricks and then left. Well I've got to go by.

The End

STOP

SCORE: 4

The response is specific and elaborated. The writer describes one feature before moving on to the next.

SAMPLE Q

Once I went to a magic show. The magician was a bear. The bears ear were very tiny. His eyes looked big and sneaky. His nose was very shiny and smooth. He had a little smile on his face. The head was furry. His bow tie was poca-doted. He had or a size ten suit which had long sleeves and came with a blouse, vest, and pants. His vest had four buttons on it. Each button had two holes in it. His blouse sleeves were rolled under. He had on silky gloves. His belt was very scratchy. His pants had no wrinkles and were scratchy too. He had black shoes. In one hand he had a hat with a cute, small bunny in it. In the other hand he had some dropping flowers which were droping water. In the air were two beautiful birds. On the other side was a table with four, skinny legs. The table had a striped cloth over it. On the table was a plump, little bunny which was leaning against his

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

elbow. He was holding onto
a round, fat balloon which had
a short string. I liked the act
so much that I clapped so
hard it made my hands sore
and I couldn't use them
for a week.

STOP

SCORE: 4

The response is unified and well elaborated. The writer employs a precise choice of words. The narrative frame enhances the effectiveness of the response.

SAMPLE R

There was a bear on the sidewalk. The
bear's eyes were striped and his nose
was so shiny. He was looking at two birds
flying in the air. His head was very
fuzzy and he looked quite sad.
He was wearing a polka dot bow.
He was also wearing a suit with
folded tops. His shirt had tiny
buttons. On his waist he wore a
band for his belt. His pants looked
gloomy. His shoes looked very flat. In
one of his hands he held a magic
hat with a frisky bunny inside of
it. The bunny's ears were cocked up.
In his other hand he held two
flowers that were not alive anymore.
Water was dripping from them.
Next to them there was a little
stand. It had stripes on it. There
was another bunny on it lying down.
It was holding a balloon in it's
hand. On the ground there were little
bulbs. They were shining.
Then the bear said he has to
perform at another place so he said
goodby.

The end.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 4

This response is well elaborated and well organized. The writer's choice of words is clear and the writer includes the locations of the objects described and the relationship of one object to another.

STOP

SCORE POINT 0

0 - THESE PAPERS ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE ASSIGNMENT. THEY INCLUDE:

- Papers that do not respond in any way to the required task, regardless of how well organized and free from mechanical errors they may be. The papers may be off the topic or they may be so vague that it is not apparent to a reader that the writer attempted to address the task assigned.

- Papers that respond only to the fact of the assignment. An example is a response that merely states, "I hate this test." Some students, however, may preface their compositions in this way and continue with their responses. In these cases, the papers are eligible for the entire range of scores.

- Papers in which the student has merely written a word or a brief phrase with no indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

- Papers that are incoherent. In these papers, the handwriting may be legible, but the spelling and/or word order are so confused that it is impossible to determine whether the writer was attempting to address the topic.

- Papers that reply, "I don't know."

- Papers that merely copy or paraphrase the assignment.

- Papers that are illegible.

- Papers that are written in a language other than English. If the paper is written entirely in a language other than English, it should not be scored, even if the reader can understand the language written. However, if enough of the paper is written in English so that the reader can determine that the response is on topic, the paper is scorable and should receive a score of at least "1."

- Blank papers. This includes papers where the student has written a response then erased what was written or crossed out what was written.

- Papers that copy a definition of some part of the stimulus from a dictionary, encyclopedia, or another source.

He is going to bol and the boys and
garLs or going to cLap. And hes going tha
thim for coming and the boys and garls
or going to good by and sae you at the
nexet show. And he will get clind up
and Live. And go to anthre show, and
he is going to be a cLown. And wene
it IS avar he is going to go home and
go to bed.

SCORE: 0

It is unclear whether the writer was attempting to respond to the topic.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

TEXAS EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
OF MINIMUM SKILLS

Scoring Guide

For Expressive/Narrative Writing at the Elementary Level

Texas Education Agency
Division of Student Assessment

58

Introduction

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. This purpose may be achieved through various methods or modes of discourse.* Three purposes and three modes have been identified as appropriate for measurement on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests. These include:

Purpose

- Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.
- Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.
- Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence an audience. However, one purpose is generally primary with others subordinate to the main purpose. In the TEAMS tests, written composition items are designed to focus as much as possible on a single purpose which is clearly stated or implied in the item.

Mode

- Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.
- Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and qualities of an idea or object.
- Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.

While each of these modes can be identified clearly, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of TEAMS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so they will use that method of organization in their responses.

* Adapted from James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971.

Scoring the Written Compositions

A process called "focused holistic scoring" has been developed to assess the TEAMS written compositions. The scoring system is "holistic" because the total piece of writing is considered. It is "focused" because the writing is evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- Organize ideas in writing
- Respond appropriately to purpose and audience (if applicable) or task in a given writing situation

Since the responses elicited in TEAMS are first-draft compositions, problems with writing mechanics, such as punctuation and spelling, are considered only if they are so serious that they interfere with the communication of the writer's ideas. The scoring criteria take into account the student's developmental capabilities and the constraints of the testing situation.

Each composition is scored independently by two trained readers who assign the paper a score of 0 (low) to 4 (high). If the two scores do not match, the paper is given to a third reader, who also evaluates the response independently. If the third score matches one of the previously assigned scores, this matched score becomes the paper's score. If the third score does not match either of the other two, the paper is given to the scoring director for resolution.

Expectations for Young Writers

Many elementary school age students struggle with the conventions of writing. Because ideas occur to them more rapidly than they can be transcribed, it is common to find words omitted or words and phrases repeated. An individual who has had experience with children of this age can read through such minor difficulties. More serious are problems of poor organization of ideas or rambling off the topic. Thus certain behaviors are appropriate developmentally for young writers, and these should be distinguished from those which indicate that the writer has not acquired the fundamental skills of putting thoughts into writing. A student's ideas must be considered as they are actually presented on paper. It is not appropriate to guess at a student's intended thoughts.

Some areas with which young writers struggle are:

Spelling - Students progress through various stages as they learn to spell the thousands of words in their oral vocabularies. Some children progress more slowly than others through the stages of learning to spell. Some papers contain numerous errors while others are virtually free of errors. Individuals who have worked with elementary school students generally find it easy to decipher nonstandard spellings, since attempts to spell usually reflect both an underlying knowledge of phonology and knowledge of what has been learned up to this point about the orthographic representation of sounds. The students' scores will be affected if numerous errors in basic, familiar words occur. However, if nonstandard spelling of more complex words can be deciphered and the flow of words makes sense to the reader, the score on the written composition will not be affected.

Attempts at Writing Dialogue - Frequently young writers will include dialogue in their responses, but few elementary school students have mastered the conventions of marking dialogue. Occasionally, an entire response will be written as dialogue, often without the benefit of dialogue markers. These papers are usually more difficult to read and may have to be reread several times before the message becomes clear. A paper can appear confusing, but if mental dialogue markers are inserted, the writer's meaning may become clear. The extent to which the meaning has been communicated after mental markers have been added determines the success of a paper of this type. Young writers should not be penalized for their attempts at engaging in written conversation unless the flow of ideas is so confusing that communication is impaired.

Punctuation - Young writers should not be expected to use all of the different punctuation marks accurately and should not be penalized for omitting them or for attempting to use a particular mark and using it incorrectly.

Run-on Sentences - Students in the elementary grades have a tendency to write run-on sentences using the conjunctions "and" or "but." The written composition score should not be affected if a student writes long sentences.

Changes in Point of View - It is not uncommon for young writers to change point of view in the middle of a composition. Some students may begin their stories in the first person and then switch to third person during the response. This switch is often not confusing if done only once or twice. It can be a problem if the writer shifts back and forth repeatedly.

Constraints of the Testing Situations - When scoring student responses, readers take into account the constraints of the testing situation. Students are asked to produce a composition without the benefit of prewriting activities such as class discussion and teacher-directed activities. These factors are especially important for young writers, since they impose conditions on the student which are different from the instructional setting for writing. In instructional situations there is generally a great deal of interaction with the teacher about what to write, how to say it, how to spell words, and how to punctuate sentences. Writing as part of a test is, in most cases, an unfamiliar activity for many elementary school age children. Though students are permitted to organize their thoughts and to make notes before they begin to write, they may not recopy their compositions. The compositions are scored as "first-draft" attempts.

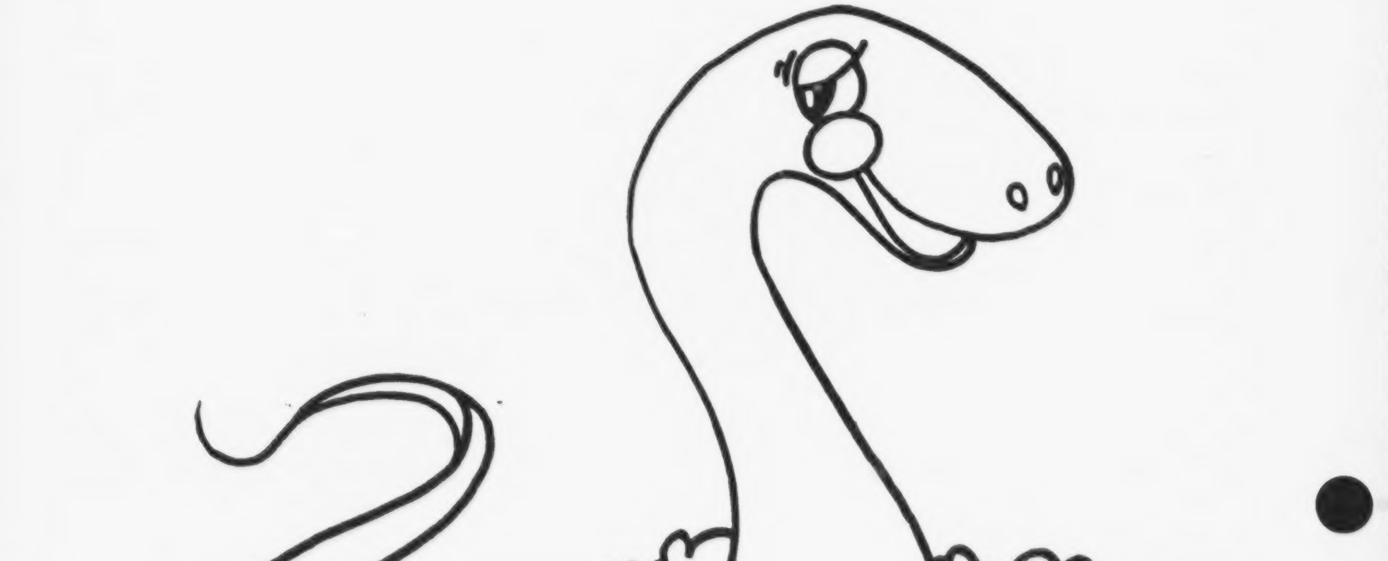
Descriptions of Score Points and Sample Papers

As specified in Subchapter O, Chapter 21, Section 21.556 of the Texas Education Code "...the State Board of Education...shall insure the security of the instruments..." Though the TEAMS written composition items must remain secure, the item included in this publication is similar in difficulty and format to TEAMS items designed to elicit expressive/narrative writing from elementary school students.

The papers presented are actual student responses to the item collected during a recent field test. These samples are typical of the types of papers fifth graders write in the actual TEAMS testing situation.

SAMPLE ITEM

Pretend this dinosaur came to life for one day. Write a story about the dinosaur's adventures that day.



SCORE POINT 1

1 = PAPERS THAT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC BUT ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL. PAPERS THAT RECEIVE A SCORE OF "1" GENERALLY DO SO FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- Responses that do not include the components of expressive/narrative writing. Following are examples of responses that attempt to address the topic but are not successful.
  - Papers that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.
  - Responses that have so little writing that there are not enough details to sequence.
  - Papers that contain events but the events are not sequenced.
  - Papers that contain information or ideas about the dinosaur or descriptions of the dinosaur, but there is no sequence of events.
  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task, but they do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment and then switch to another topic altogether.

- Responses that contain an unelaborated or barely elaborated linked sequence of events. Some of these responses are characterized by their skeletal nature; i.e., they merely relate a series of events and may appear to be a list. Other responses contain a linked sequence of events with limited elaboration.

- Responses that exhibit a lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired. Responses that fall into this category are difficult to decipher because of confused syntax or extensive misspellings. Syntax is confused when words are not arranged in a logical order. The reader can only guess at the writer's intent, and it is not appropriate for a reader to make such inferences. The reader should attempt to figure out misspelled words; however , if the quantity of misspelled words is great and the words being misspelled are basic, the response should receive a "1."

- Papers that are poorly organized or contain major gaps. In some of these responses, excessive rambling and/or limited cohesion make the story difficult to follow. Other responses contain major gaps that cause confusion.

Before that dinousor came to life I saw its bones just sitting there then it started to grow skin. Then it got off of the ground and almost stepped on me. I said come with me and the dinusser followed me to the river. It caught all sorts of fish in the water so it decided to live there. where nobody could disturb the dinusour but me because I lead the dinusovr there in the first place.

The end

SCORE: 1

The response is sparse and contains a barely elaborated linked sequence of events.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE B

dinosaur's was a big animals in the adnes will Kill them for they can eat them. It wold be a lot of dinosaur's now if they woldnot Kill them. dinosaur's wold cat made at them. in they wold Kell the little babby. dinosaur's woed Kell bird, cat, dog, in they Kell peopel. In they eat green greens. In some dinosaur's live in water. They are big in heres in aucuck. They have two big eyes in they Kate a lock neck to. in it be v ocs in depues. in the have lot of badly to. They have big feet. lick you. in 1988 dinosaur was Kill ho Kell them. I now the soech Kill the dinsaur. In dinosaur's was made at about Kill them. but the dinsaur's Caan get them

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 1

This response does not include the components of expressive/narrative writing. Its theme is "all I know about dinosaurs." In addition, the writer exhibits problems with the control of language.

STOP

SAMPLE C

"The Dinosaur That Came To Life"

One day I went to a musim. There was this big dinosaur. All of the sudden it started to move everyone ran out the dinosaur was folling me. It seemed to be nice so I stoped running. His name was Rick. We went to a pond. We had so much fun. After that everyone started not to be afraid of him. He helped people to do there work. One day he even helped catch a buglar. I was just lucky that I stoped running when I did.

SCORE: 1

This response contains a barely elaborated linked sequence of events.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The Dinosaur's Adventures

The dinosaur will go to the city and smile at everyone. Then go to the coastline to swim, and the Great Lakes. Swim to Porto Rico to eat out some of there many rain forest. Try to make good friends with kids, he makes a great slide and a diving board. He's friendly, gentle not like all dinosaurs. His favorite town is Johnson City, he say's the people their not afraid of me, like everybody else is.

He would be sculptered and painted so no one would forget him, because he has only one day. He's staring in a movey, he's playing the lockness monster. The movie is called Lockness in England. His best friend is Mrs. Moore. He is over 900 years old, but he looks like a baby. When he walks birds always run in to his neckand face. He has no teeth but big round eyes about six feet around

He is 70 feet long not counting his tail. He weighs 700 tons, and gets a bath every day. The ground rumbles whe he walks to the beach. I sleep with him at the beach. Some sharks try to bite him and then he gets mad and swims underwater after them, and when he catches them he eats them. When he goes up north his eyes hurt and he can bearly breathe because of the smog. He's not real picky about stuff. The junkyard hired him to smash cars he has a fun time doing this job. He says if you like your work you will do a good job. Its elleven thirty he has to kiss his friends goodby

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Every one is caying the Russains hate him because he would not go over there it is midnight as he swims of he get's further and farther away untill he's gone. No one will forget him, and he will never forget them. The movies he made is nomber one on the list, Its the greatest thing since the Extra Trerestrial. No one knows where, how he went, and what happened to him. They named him Alexander the Gander.

The End

SCORE: 1

This response does not include a linked sequence of events. Though isolated events are scattered throughout the response, the events have not been tied together into a narrative. It is a description of a specific dinosaur.

STOP

SAMPLE E

Dinosaurs

There was a dinosaur that some eat grass, or meat, and Here was the biggest dinosaur named Brontosaurus and was walking in the swamp earing grass, and then something came out And it was Tyranosaurus Rex So he went in the swamp it wouldnt get him. Then he came out of the swamp and ate soma grass. Then an Vocano was anything Then all the dinosaur's had died.

SCORE: 1

This paper consists of an unelaborated sequence of events. In addition, major gaps in information are present.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 2

2 = **PAPERS WHICH RESPOND MINIMALLY TO THE TASK WITH EXPRESSIVE WRITING PRESENTED IN THE NARRATIVE MODE. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- o Responses that contain a somewhat elaborated sequence of events achieved through such devices as description and dialogue.

- o Responses in which organization is apparent although the responses contain gaps or rambling. In some responses, narrative clusters may be evident; however, gaps occur between the clusters. In other responses, rambling may occur but does not cause confusion.

- o Responses characterized by limited control of written language. These responses may contain awkward or simplistic sentence structure. The word choice may be limited and errors in usage may occur.

SAMPLE F

The Dinosaur That Came To Life and Died

Hello, My name is Carl and you won't guess what a died dinosaur did. It came to life and people been yelling and sceaming. It tipped over a newpaper stand and kicked cars miles a miles.

I saw it going to a lake called the lockness where the lockness monster lives.

Maybe the lockness monster is a brother or a sister to that other dinosaur.

Oh, No, Both giust popped out of the water just now. Here come the police and the police are shooting at the two dinosaur.

Now it is dark and the day is almost over. Both monster went under water and the police stopped shooting.

I see blood in the water. The dinosaures must of have got into a fight and the lockness monster must have won.

The other lost at 12:00 pm on the dot. Amen.

SCORE: 2

The response contains a somewhat elaborated sequence of events; however, confusing references to time weakens the narrative.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE G

A Dinosaur's Adventures

Once a dinosaur came to life in New York City. He found many wonderful things. While he was looking around he saw the Empire State Building and thought if he climbed it he would be able to see places from miles away. But as soon as he got to the to he was met by King Kong. The dinosaur decided he'd better find something else to do.

He was traveling west to swim in Lake Michigan when suddenly an airplane ran into his head. The dinosaur thought he was being attacked and ran all the way to Colorado then tripped over Pike's Peak. That sent him tumbling all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The people in California thought it was an Earthquake.

The dinosaur was getting tired so he streched out over the United States (moving all the people out of the way) and went to sleep

SCORE: 2

This response contains a series of narrative clusters; however, transitional statements between clusters are missing.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE H

The Day The Dinosaur Came To Life.

One day in the Everglades of Florida a strange and unusual thing happened. A large rumble could be heard for miles, and out of the water seventeen feet high a dinosaur.

He had a long tail, large body, large feet, long neck, and a farly size head. The dinosaur was shy and peaceful.

Quigly he got out of the water and whent to discover all he could. He saw a big arena. The suddenly he heard a "smack", and a fall whent flying through the sky. Then he heard screaming music, fireworks, and saw hats, gloves, and bats. He went around the back. He saw people on a field. There were three white bags and two plates. He saw a board with numbers and then the people went mad the game was over. The dinosaur went scard he ran everywhere. Then fell in the water.

Later that night he woke up and had a hat on, a banner, and on his hand he had a glove on, in that glove was a baseball with alot of names on it.

SCORE: 2

This response is a high "2." The beginning of the response is well-elaborated; however, starting with the third paragraph the writer does not maintain this level of elaboration.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE I

Lisa the Dinosaur

"Hello my name is Lisa,
I live in an old cave by
the waterfall." "It is a beatiful place
to live," said Lisa. She loved
to play outside.
When she got up she went
to her cozy little kitchen and
cooked herself some fried eggplant.
Afterwards she cleaned up her
mess. Then she went to
clean up the rest of her house.
After that she was so
tired of all that cleaning
she lied down to take a nap.
She finally woke up and it
was only 1:30 so she went out
to play.
When she came in it
was almost dark so she
fixed herself some supper.
She cleaned up and went
to bed.

SCORE: 2

The organizational strategy in this response is apparent, and the sequence of events is elaborated enough for a "2."

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The Oil

In 1935 me and my dad went to Spring Field. We had 4 barnels of oil we dumped the oil in Spring Field Lake. The next morning we went to the lake standing there. With my mouth wide open I saw a dinosaur. She was pink we tide her to the truck and carried her home. When we got home I took her a path in our pool. She was getting hungry so I fixed her 20 sandwiches. The we played a game of hopscotch every time she jumps she shake the entir unaverse. Then it was get dark she felt sleepy then she died and all of that oil. Was back in the 4 barrels and that was the end of her.

SCORE: 2

This response contains a somewhat elaborated linked sequence of events. Although control of language is limited, it does not interfere with meaning.

SCORE POINT 3

3 = THESE PAPERS REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT TELLING A STORY. THERE IS NO DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THE STORY LINE. THE ELABORATION CONTAINED IN THESE PAPERS IS CONTROLLED ADDING SUBSTANCE TO THE STORY LINE. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

- o Responses that present a moderately well elaborated sequence of events.
- o Responses which incorporate an organizational strategy, although brief digressions or lapses may occur.
- o Responses that exhibit a control of written language characterized by clarity of expression and effective word choice.

"The Dinosaur that came to life for a Day"

There once was a dinosaur who came to life for a day and an adventurous day he going to have. Along the way the dinosaur met a racoon and his name was Tom. Tom the racoon got to know the dinosaur very well and Tom decided the name him Smily because Smily always had a smile and grin on his face. Tom the racoon told Smily it was time for me to my early morning breakfast. Tom and Smily started walking down to the creek. As Tom and Smily neared the creek. They heard a noise and when Tom and Smily got to the creek. All noise that Tom and Smily had heard was just Sam the grizzly bear. Sam was down at the creek getting his breakfast too. Tom was starving so he got in the water and offered Smily some fish, but Smily no I don't like fish. Tom went ahead got him a fish and ate it in one gulp. Smily said, "Come yall so we can go back so I can find me some food so I can eat soon because I'm starving." By the time Smily, Tom, and Sam back it was lunch time. Smily left a pinic basket full of food for him eat, but it was gone when he got back. Smily told his three friends that he could for rest of the day. Tom and Sam why just for the rest of day? Smily told them that he wasn't really alive I just came to life. At the end of the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

day when Sam and Tom left. Smily said GoodBye and
said had a very nice and adventurous day. After awhile
Smily disappeared. Smily did enjoy his one
day alive on earth.

SCORE: 3

This paper is a low "3." The response is moderately well elaborated, though a few brief lapses occur in the linking of events. While several words are omitted, their absence does not impair meaning.

STOP

SAMPLE L

"Show Biz!"

"Hi!" my name is Dino. I am a dinosaur. Last night while I was asleep I dreamed that when I woke up that I would have a person voice. When I woke, the dream was true! I was so happy so, now here I am coming out of my cave to talk to my friends. I try to talk to them but they all laugh and go away. I think that I shall have some adventure. I'm going to Hollywood, California. It's only one hundred miles! I can make it there in at least 1 hour. Oh, Gee! I've always wanted to go to the city.

One hour later.... Boy! Hollywood is great! I think I'll go to the park. "Gotcha!" I heard a ruff voice say. "You're comin' with me!" "You overgrown lizard"

So, here I am in the pound! Gosh! They even had to build a fence to put me in. Well I gues I'll wait and see if anyone

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

want's me. Hey, I see someone coming. I say, "I talk, would you care to own me?" Then, the man said, "Charlie did you hear that?" "I sure did Gerald!" "Let's take him he'll be a big hit!' I said "Where do you guys work?" "We work in movie making place," said Gerald. "You mean I'm going to be a star you sure are! Oh! Boy! "What series am I going to be on?" "I think we'll call it "Make way for... what is your name anyway" said Charlie. "Oh!" I said. Dino. "O.K." said Charlie it shall be called "Make way for Dino!"" "Thanks alot guys," I said. "I think I'm really gonna like it!"

STOP

SCORE: 3

The response is moderately well elaborated and includes an organizational strategy, though several digressions occur. The writer uses dialogue effectively.

One Day

One day I was walking threw the Jungle and I started to walk up a cliff when it moved. I Just thought it was a little earthquake.

So I kept on going until I relized that this cliff wasn't here last time and then the cliff started to rise up and wag a limb but then I seen his face it was a dinosaur and I was so scared I passed out and I fell off of him but he caught me with his tail and brought me up to his face and said " My name is dino whats yours.

And thats when I really freaked out.

I couldn't believe it, it talked to me, then I said my-y-y name is Donny. then he said done be afraid Of me I am friendly and he said I have a problem I said what about.

He said I will die tomorrow I can only live for one day. I said why you look healthy. But Im not he said and I decided lets forget about dieing and play. He said O.K. so I started sliding down hes tail. but the day was almost over and I could her my moma calling me. but the Dinosaur started to cry. and I said don't cry. and It picked me up and I kissed hem and said good bye and went home.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 3

This response is characterized by moderate development, including description and dialogue. The ending is abrupt.

STOP

The Adventures of Cindy The Dinosaur.

It was late at night, and the dinosaur musim had closed. But suddenly one of the dinosaurs cane to life. It was a huge dinosaur and so when she walked she made holes in the floor.

She walked out of the musim and into the dark night. She was feeling very hungry so she decited to go to the park and eat some trees She ate and ate until she was full. Then she went off to find something to dink finily she got to the public swimming pool and drank all of the water out of it.

She walked all over town. She passed an all night dinner and the lady working there started screaming. "Harry come quick I just saw a monster walking down the street!" and Harry said, "Now just calm down, I knew waching all of thoes late knigh horror movies were going to catch

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

up with you!!!

Soon Cindy began to get sleppy and she decited to go back to the musim.

She had had a wonderfull night

The End,

SCORE: 3

The response is moderately well-elaborated. The dialogue fits well into the organizational strategy; however, the ending is abrupt.

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = PAPERS AT THIS LEVEL ARE CONSISTENT, WELL-ORGANIZED, AND WELL-ELABORATED NARRATIVES. THESE RESPONSES ARE UNIFIED AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE PAPERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A narrative that has a clear sense of beginning and ending. The writer does not stop writing abruptly but brings closure to the writing by resolving the action. Occasionally, a writer begins to tell a story and then runs out of paper before bringing the story to an effective conclusion. If an otherwise well-written story ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- A story that follows the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer does not make abrupt confusing shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer handles these in a clear, effective manner.

- A response that uses varied syntactic constructions and effective narrative devices. Though the writer may not consistently incorporate the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is nevertheless effective by virtue of its overall fluency.

- A response that includes rich details and varied word choices. The details embellish the unfolding of events. The events of the story are portrayed through vivid language and extensive elaboration.

SAMPLE O

My Friend The Dinosaur

One day after school I had gone for a walk in the forest near my house. I had brought a football with me to play with. I threw the ball and it landed behind some bushes. I climbed over the bushes to get the ball. When I had the ball I saw something very strange in some other bushes. It was very huge. I looked up high in the sky and it was a dinosaur. I was very frightend and I thought dinosaurs were extenct. I ran as fast as I could until a relized I left my football. I didn't know what to do so I kept on running. I heard the dinosaur crying so I had stoped behind a tree. It looked very lonely so I took my chances and went back for my football. He put his head down for me and I climbed up it because he had eaten my football. He took me aroud the whole forest 37 times. I began to like him very much. I took him took him to my house threw an alley. I put him in our garage. I went in the house to get a jacket. I told my mom that I was going to my friends house and she said "All right." I went out to get my dinosaur. We went to my school to play there for a while. The dinosaur

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

got very hungry. I took him back home so I could get to left over pizza from yesterday. He ate the whole thing even the box. I had 1 hour before bedtime. I took the dinosaur to the park were we could play in the sand. We played at the park for 30 min. I took the dinosaur home because it was close to bed time I put him in the garage where he could keep warm. I went in and went to bed and kept a light on in my room so he wouldn't get scared. The next morning I went out in the garage and the dinosaur was gone. He left a message saying he will miss me. I went back to the forest and he want there but my football was with something on it. It said "I'll vist you". Then I went home and went to school.

SCORE: 4

The minor inconsistencies are overwhelmed by the overall fluency of the response. The paper has a clear sense of beginning and ending.

STOP

Jino The Dinosaur

I was walking along the beach of Hawaii when I saw bubbles forming on the top of the lake. I walked closer. Then I saw a head appear... then a body! It was a dinosaur in front of my very eyes! She walked toward me. At least I thought it was a girl it had long eyelashes and rosy cheeks. Yes, it was a girl. She nuzzled her nose close to me. "She likes me!" I yelled.

We walked through the bushes and palm trees until we came to an X on the sand. I had never seen it before. Jino, the dinosaur (that's what I named her) scooped some dirt in her mouth and put it beside me. She repeated. Then a chest covered with purple silk and gold handles appeared. I opened it cautiously and there sparkling in the sunshine were crowns, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. Jino and I were stunned. We sat down looking through the jewels. Jino looked alert, as though she heard something. Sure enough I heard "Beat the bushes beat the trees! find my gold and satin chest!" said a deep gruff voice followed by cheers. Jino ran. ~~and~~ I started to run, but two strong men grabbed me and brought me back to a man that looked like a pirate. In fact they all were pirates. I figured the deep gruff voice was the cheif, his name was Smitty. "What me got here, a theif!" Smitty said. My cheeks were flaming with anger.

Out of nowhere Jino came running kicked the pirates in one blow! Jino smiled with a big smile and rosy cheeks, and she went back into the water.

"Jino the HERO! Saved the chest and me and showed that Captain Smitty" I cried and ran back home with great happiness.

STOP

SCORE: 4

The narrative is well structured. This response includes rich details and a variety of vivid phrases such as "flaming with anger" and "nuzzled her nose." The writer varies his/her sentence structure and uses effective narrative devices such as conversation and dialect.

SAMPLE Q

The Dinosaur's Adventures

It was a cool summer morning, I was walking in a park and all of a sudden I saw a huge lizzard like animal. I really thought it was a lizzard for a while, then a zoo keeper came along. I asked him, "Do you know what kind of animal this is?" The zoo keeper said, "I believe it is a dinosaur." "Do you think I could keep it," I said. Well I went home and asked my mother if I could keep the dinosaur. My mother said "Yes, but you will keep it in the back yard!" Then I went back to the park to get the dinosaur, but it was gone! I looked and looked and looked but I couldn't find the dinosaur. Finally I found the big critter. It was behind a big water tower. I took the dinosaur home and we both played hide-n-go-seek. It was easy for me to find him, but he Spent all day try to find me. Well it was getting too dark and I had to go and eat supper.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

After I got through eating supper I turned on the porch light and went back at to play with Big. I named it Big because it was so huge. Well anyway I could not find Big anywhere, I looked all over the city and couldn't find Big. The next day my father helped me look for Big. We looked all over the state. We couldn't find him. I started to cry. My father said, "It will be all right." I said, "Well there isn't any other animal like Big." "He will come back some day." I keep on waiting and waiting for big to come back, but he never did. I said, "Well it wasn't worth all the trouble we went through to find Big anyway!" I started STOP

to live my life again, play with my friends, go to the park, fishing, swimming and just have lost of fun. After, awhile I got a dog to play with too, the dog live a long life with me! The End

SCORE: 4

The response has a clear beginning and ending and follows the narrative progression throughout.

Our Trip to the City Museum

One day my friend Lisa and I went on a trip. We went to many places, but it all started at our city museum.

We saw many things suchas Eskimos, Indians, animals, mamals, fossils, and our favorite one of all, dinosaurs.

Lisa wispered, "I wish this dinosaur was real!" Then we heard a wisper, we looked at eachother and shugged our shoulders. We both turned our heads toward the wispering dinosaur.

He was tall and big, but as cute and cuddleable as a stuffed animal (toy). He said he was real and it was hard standing still for millions of years without a thing to eat. Lisa and I knew that he was hinting. So he followed us toward the exit of the museum.

First we went to eat, we stopped at McDonalds. Next we went to the park to play. We played hide and go seek, but the dinosaur never found us and we always found him. It didn't work out.

Lisa and I were tired and couldn't walk farther, so the dinsaur sayed just clime on to my neck, so Lisa and I got on and the dinosaur walked off.

He was amazed with the houses, and all the big city sights. He asked us if we were even on Earth. We said yes and that a lot could happen in 300 million years or more. The dinosaur was still puzzled as he looked at the huge city. But we soothed him by not saying anymore about the past and going somewhere

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else.

Next we went to the zoo. That didn't help, because we told him almost every animal in America was in the zoo. We looked around and the dinosaur asked where animals of his kind were. When we told him they were all gone exept him he broke out in tears, and sayed he must go back to the museum but with us to explain that his's really alive and to keep him as the only living dinosaur. He was happy and was feed well. So he stayed the night.

Lisa and I went back to see him the next day and when we got there he was a stuffed dinosaur as the rest with an imprint on his leg saying, "Sorry Lisa + Katharine but I was only to live for a day and must go back to see the rest of my kind. Love you and miss you, dinasaur."

Lisa cried and I did too, but we must have known there were some of his kind at his zoo. We left that day with a tear in our eye, but remimbered the day of a dinosaur at play.

STOP

SCORE: 4

This response is characterized by its overall fluency. The writer elaborates extensively.

The Dinosaur's Adventure

One autumn day a dinosaur came walking along a giant swamp. He was so big that could barely go through his very own swamp!

As the day went by, he saw that no birds, more animals, came to play with him, then he began to cry, big tears came out of dinosaur's eyes. Then he saw something very small at his feet, he looked down, it was a bird, he was very wounded, his wing was broken. He gently picked him up, at put him in a nice little spot on a tree.

Suddenly the little bird woke-up, and shivered with fear, and then the dinosaur said, "Don't be afraid of me, all I want to do is help you to get well." And the little bird said, "You are the fearcid looking giant, everyone is talking about right! And the dinosaur said," Yes, I am the one that litly fury creatures, are afraid of."

That day the little bird was, well, he told the dinosaur, if he wanted to go with him to a palace,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

in the faraway lands. The dinosaur then said that he would go with him, and so they went.

On the way over there they saw some rabbits, foxes, deers, and other creatures talking to one another. And then the little bird spoke, he said, "Do not be afraid of this creature, he is a friend to everyone."

For a few minutes everything was silent, then the rabbit stepped up and said, "My name is Hoppy, whats your name?" The dinosaur said, "my name is Custard, Custard the dinosaur"

That afternoon every animal that he met became his friend. The dinosaur was so happy, that when he reached the palace, he gave a big celebration, to all his knew friends.

After that day, every animal would come by and visit him every afternoon! STOP

SCORE: 4

Though this response does not contain vivid language, it is well elaborated and consistent in its organizational strategy.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = THESE PAPERS ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE ASSIGNMENT. THEY INCLUDE:

- Papers that do not respond in any way to the required task, regardless of how well organized and free from mechanical errors they may be. These papers may be totally off the topic or they may be so vague that it is not apparent to a reader that the writer attempted to address the task assigned.
- Papers that respond only to the fact of the assignment. An example is a response that merely states, "I hate this test." Some students, however, may preface their compositions in this way and continue with their responses. In these cases, the papers are eligible for the entire range of scores.
- Papers in which the student has merely written a word or a brief phrase with no indication of an attempt to attend to the task.
- Papers that are incoherent. In these papers, the handwriting may be legible, but the spelling and/or word order are so confused that it is impossible to determine whether the writer was attempting to address the topic.
- Papers that reply, "I don't know."
- Papers that merely copy or paraphrase the assignment.
- Papers that are illegible.
- Papers that are written in a language other than English. If the paper is written entirely in a language other than English, it should not be scored, even if the reader can understand the language written. However, if enough of the paper is written in English so that the reader can determine that the response is on topic, the paper is scorable and should receive a score of at least "1."
- Blank papers. This includes papers where the student has written a response then erased what was written or crossed out what was written.
- Papers which copy a known fairy tale or rhyme. It must be evident to the reader that the student has copied the response from an outside source. If the writer borrows the story line from a fairy tale or other source but composes his/her own response, the paper is eligible for the entire range of scores.
- Papers that copy a definition of some part of the stimulus from a dictionary, encyclopedia, or another source.

TEAMS

TEXAS EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

OF MINIMUM SKILLS

Scoring Guide

For Informative/Classificatory Writing at the Secondary Level

Texas Education Agency
Division of Student Assessment

Introduction

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. This purpose may be achieved through various methods or modes of organization.* Three purposes and three modes have been identified as appropriate for measurement on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests. These include:

Purpose

- Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.
- Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.
- Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence an audience. However, one purpose is generally primary with others subordinate to the main purpose. In the TEAMS tests, written composition items are designed to focus as much as possible on a single purpose which is clearly stated or implied in the item.

Mode

- Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.
- Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and qualities of an idea or object.
- Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.

While each of these modes can be identified clearly, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of TEAMS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so they will use that method of organization in their responses.

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* Adapted from James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971

Scoring the Written Compositions

A process called "focused holistic scoring" has been developed to assess the TEAMS written composition. The scoring system is "holistic" because the total piece or writing is considered. It is "focused" because the writing is evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- Organize ideas in writing

- Respond appropriately to purpose and audience in a given writing situation

Since the responses elicited in TEAMS are first-draft compositions, problems with writing mechanics, such as punctuation and spelling are considered only if they are so serious that they interfere with the communication of the writer's ideas. The scoring criteria take into account the student's developmental capabilities and the constraints of the testing situation.

Each composition is scored independently by two trained readers who assign the paper a score of 0 (low) to 4 (high). If the two scores do not match, the paper is given to a third reader, who also evaluates the response independently. If the third score matches one of the previously assigned scores, this matched score becomes the student's score. If the third score does not match either of the other two, the paper is given to the scoring director for resolution.

APPLICATION OF THE CRITERIA TO INFORMATIVE/CLASSIFICATORY WRITING

Organize Ideas in Writing

Organization of ideas in informative/classificatory writing is characterized by the extent to which students develop consistent reasons in their responses that are organized and well elaborated informative presentations of advantages and/or disadvantages. In successful responses there will also be clear allusion to the other point of view. Most successful responses will contain introductory and concluding statements, the responses will be unified and easy to read and transitional elements will be used effectively.

Respond Appropriately to Purpose and Audience

Since the purpose of this task is to provide information, students are expected to convey ideas to the specified audience. The method for organizing these ideas is by classifying them according to certain attributes.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITERS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

Use of Language

The responses are not to be judged on the mechanical aspects of writing, i.e., spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage unless these errors impair communication. However, the aspects of writing which deal with the way ideas are expressed should be considered in determining the student's score. In better responses, reasons will be presented clearly and the writing will flow smoothly. These papers will be relatively free of awkward phrases, choppy sentences, and confusing sentence constructions. Likewise, better responses will be characterized by a highly effective and precise choice of words.

Constraints of the Testing Situation

When scoring student responses, readers must take into account the constraints of the testing situation. Students are asked to produce a composition without the benefit of prewriting activities such as class discussion and teacher-directed activities. These factors are especially important since they impose conditions on the student which are different from the instructional setting for writing. The compositions are scored as first-draft attempts. Even "4" papers will contain errors and lapses that would likely not be present if students had time to rewrite, revise, and edit their writing. Students are permitted to organize their thoughts and make notes in their test booklets before they begin to write. However, they are not permitted to recopy their compositions. Students are not permitted to use dictionaries or other reference materials when composing their responses.

Descriptions of Score Points and Sample Papers

As specified in Subchapter O, Chapter 21, Section 21.556 of the Texas Education Code "...the State Board of Education...shall insure the security of the instruments..." Though the TEAMS written composition items must remain secure, the item included in this publication is similar in difficulty and format to TEAMS items designed to elicit informative/classificatory writing from secondary school students.

The papers presented are actural student responses to the item collected during a recent field test. These samples are typical of the types of papers seventh graders write in the actual TEAMS testing situation.

Sample Prompt

Most people have friends whom they have known for a short time and friends whom they have known for years. Think about how new friends and old friends are alike and different. Write a composition for your teacher in which you explain both how new friends and old friends are alike and how they are different.

SCORE POINT 1

1 = THESE PAPERS ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO THE TOPIC BUT FAIL TO RESPOND IN A MANNER THAT IS MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF PAPERS FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- o Papers that contain a list of words or phrases with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.
- o Papers that list or discuss activities of friends or give an encyclopedic description of friends.
- o Papers that respond to the stimulus in a skeletal way. These papers may include some points, but they are vague or unclear.
- o Papers in which the readers must infer the relationship between the information presented and the point that information is intended to clarify.
- o Papers that ramble with no apparent organization and leave the reader confused.
- o Responses that exhibit a lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired. The flow of the response is impeded as a result of repeated errors at the word level, the sentence level, or the composition level.
  - oo At the word level there may be repeated errors in spelling basic words, word choice, and usage.
  - oo At the sentence level, syntax may be confused. This occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order or there is an apparent order, but the meaning is unclear. It is not appropriate for readers to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences as to the writer's meaning.
  - oo At the composition level, the thoughts are confused to the point where the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say. These papers lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant, repetitious, or nonexistent.
- o Papers in which the points presented are inappropriate for the audience. Inappropriate points include:
  - oo those that involve unlawful acts.
  - oo those that use obscene language.
  - oo those that advocate lewdness.

Sample A

I've have had alot of freinds and I have old freinds and I have new freind today I'm going to ride how my new freinds are alike to my old freinds well I knew freinds when we moved to some new apartment near to the city park of ________ Well my new freind are alike to my Old freind because they like playing game's like Foot ball and basket ball they are alike because they like the same kind of music they act a little bit the same way. My Old freinds are diffrent to my New friend's because my old freinds didn't have car's to move in they were always on bikes or on foot and my new freind's some of them have car's or if not there parent's will lend the car's to them and my old friend's didn't go to a park they would go to the boy's Club and over hear where my new freinds are they always go to a park or to the stores and the Old freind's didn't go to store's and over there we were alway in bike with my old freind and that's all.

Score Point 1: The writer rambles and repeats with no apparent organization.

Activities of friends are merely listed.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Sample B

New friends

I hAve met new friends and then we become best friends. but if I see they ARE going to be mess I don't Call those can of people friends. and you can be friends a long time. and they will want to fright they would WANt to boss you with youR on stuff they would WANt to tAke you stuff And never give it BACK,

Score Point 1: This paper responds to the stimulus in a very skeletal way. It is vague, unclear, and narrative. Control of written language is lacking.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Sample C

The diference of old Friends and new Friends is. The old Friends know your live be cause you Know him at lat of time, and you talk wef hem all the time and She or he and you go to the movie and lat of Parts. and you not go weef the other friend be cause you don't know him, and you don't like to go white hem, be Cause you Can talk by hem what's hapen by your live. be cause you dont know, if She don't Say to one vody, or She like to Say to othersfriends that She have. and you like to lalk wef your old Friends be cause you are old and best Friends. bot is Fin if you have and other Friends, be cause is beatefur if you have lat of Friends, I like to have lot of Friends. and talk wef all people, you need to lalk to other people, to have lat of Friends. and I thing all the people like to have lat of Friends.

Score Point 1: This paper attempts to respond to the topic but is minimally successful. Ths lack of control of written language impairs communication. There is no apparent organization. The paper is confusing and it leaves the reader wondering what the writer means. There are repeated errors in basic spelling words.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 2

2 = THESE PAPERS RESPOND TO THE TOPIC IN A MANNER THAT IS MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL. THEY EXHIBIT MOST OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- An organizational strategy that is apparent but inconsistent and/or repetitious so that the logical progression of the response is at times disrupted but not confused.
- A minimally sufficient number of points. This can be accomplished in one of three ways:
  - The paper presents one moderately elaborated point.
  - The paper presents a few specific points with at least one point somewhat elaborated.
  - The paper presents a lengthy set of unelaborated points, some of which are specific.
- Presentation of only one side -- no matter how well done -- with no allusion to the other side. ("I can't think of any differences" is an allusion to the other side.)
- Some control of the written language. These responses may contain simplistic phrasing or syntax, convoluted sentence structure, and/or awkward word choice.

New friends are different from old friends, because they don't know you as well. Old friends know your carakter, and you temperament. They know what you like or dislike. New friends therefor are more interesting, because you learn new things, places, and hobbies, that you didnt hear of before. They might give you new ideas and tips on how to do things. Through new friends you may find some other new friends as well as find out that they know your old friends. Sometimes you might come into a group or club that way.

But you loose new friends, too. The reason for loosing new friends, is maynly different inerests or not seeing them often enough.

Score Point 2: Some specific points are presented in this paper; one point, "new friends...are interesting," is elaborated somewhat. The paper adheres to the task only minimally.

Little is written about "old friends," although the writer would have had an excellent opportunity when she/he stated: "old friends know your carakter, and you temperament."

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Sample E

Old friends are not like new friends.
Old friends don't try to show off or try to
put you down when the have something.
New friends like to show how many things
they have. They go around talking about
you and call themselves peoples friends.
Old friends wouldn't do that to you.
If old friends have something on their
minds they'll tell you instead of going off
talking about you. New friends are all
ways trying to prove to be your friend but
always talk about you. When old friends have
something they will share it instead of saying
"Go buy your own stuff." But when you have
something they expect you to give it to them. That
is why old friends why I think are better.

Score point 2: The writer is somewhat repetitious. This disrupts the logical progression of ideas somewhat, but it is not confusing to the reader. The paper contains several specific points and while elaboration is sparse, the writer considers both sides of the issue.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Sample F

Old Friends and New Friends

The difference between old, and new friends is a great deal. An old friend, you can usualy talk to them about anything. (and I mean anything.) But with a new friend you kind of have to watch what you say because you may not be sure that they are the kind of people you can just come out and start talking about something private. Because that old friend you've been around for a long time can talk to you about it because she knows you better, but the new friend doesn't know you as well.

The way old, and new friends are alike is that you can both have fun together, they are both your friends. They might just like by you, they both might like the same things, in a certain way they may act alike, and they could like each other.

The End!

Score: 2 This paper exhibits an organizational strategy. One point, the ability to "talk about anything" with old friends is somewhat elaborated. The writer states a few specific but unelaborated points concerning how old and new friends are alike.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

3 = THESE PAPERS REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT INCLUDING ELABORATED PRESENTATIONS OF WHAT IS ALIKE AND/OR WHAT IS DIFFERENT WITH AT LEAST SOME ALLUSION TO THE OTHER SIDE. THEY HAVE A CONSISTENT ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN, ALTHOUGH OCCASIONAL LAPSES, REPETITIONS OR DIGRESSIONS MAY OCCUR, BUT THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER WAS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF PAPERS FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- Papers that have one developed presentation of what is alike and/or what is different.
- Papers that have two or more moderately elaborated presentations of what is alike and/or what is different.
- Papers that have a lengthy set of presentations of what is alike and/or what is different, one of which is moderately elaborated or several of which are somewhat elaborated.
- Papers that have a number of points saying what is alike and/or what is different, most of which are somewhat elaborated. There is clarity of expression, effective word choice, transitions between ideas, and a general control of the written language.

I have many friends in my neighborhood and in my school. I also have old friends and new ones. My friends that are old friends are often theones who come to my house to spend the night, go to a movie or just talk with about more personal things then I would talkabout with my new friends. My new and old friends differ in many ways. My new friends, I like to talk about things like school and different things we may have in common.

My old friends I'm probably a little more relaxed with and I feel I can talk to them about more serious matters.

Even though old and new friends can be different, they can be the same. Both new and old friends I like to joke with. I also like to sit at a table in the cafeteria during lunch and eat with them. The biggest likeness is that both new and old friends are still my friends.

Score Point 3: This paper develops several ideas. It classifies old and new friends by what one can do with them, what level of communication is possible, and how one feels in their presence. There is effective word choice and clarity of expression. The ideas are somewhat elaborated.

STOP

Sample H

I think the way old friends and new friends are diffent is the way they act. When you have a new friend they sometimes seem a bit jittery, but when you have an old one, their just right.

A new friend likes to talk about his or her personality, but an old one you know their personality. But if old or new they like things that you like. Take for instance basketball. Also you may hardly ever argue about things but always agree on what ever it is.

With both old and new you would always stick together to the very end. With a new friend you may talk more with because your just getting to know them very well.

But with an old one It can be difficult because you've talked about most everything.

But there is something quite tragic about having both old and new friends. They either die or move away to some far, far, away place that you can never be able to reach them again. Anyway it's nice to have friends old or new.

Score Point 3: The writer makes a good attempt at elaboration, chooses effective wording, and alludes to both sides of the issue. There is a digression ("Take for instance basketball.") which could have contributed to the content of it had been

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

elaborated. The writer digresses and then returns to the concept of "talking" with friends. Despite these weaknesses, the reader has no difficulty understanding what the writer attempts to say. The paper has clarity of expression and control of the written language.

STOP

Sample I

Old friends and new friends are alot alike. For one thing their both your friends and they both like you. Their fun to do things with like like riding, wrestling, watching T.V., or just hanging out. But there are some differences like old friends know what you like and new friends don't. Old friends know what to do to make up if you have a fight. Old friends are alway around when you need them. New friends don't know what to do to please you and sometimes they mess up stuff. But new friends are fast learners and some even have better ideas than old friends. Most of the time they can do things that your old friend hated or was scared to do. New friends are always under foot though because they try to hard to be like your old friend and mess things up but its more fun when your old friend is always under foot because you can teach them new things and tell then secrets you wouldn't dare tell your new friend because he might go tell someone else. So the way I see it its fun to have both friends around because you can have even more fun.

Score Point 3: This paper represents a good attempt at elaboration. The writer develops the issues: old and new friends, likenesses and differences, within a consistent organizational pattern.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

He/she has clarity of expression and even incorporates a figure of speech: "New friends are always under foot... ." Informative and classificatory skills are evident. Some repetition, which does not distract the reader, is present.

STOP

I have lots of new friends. Most of them I've knew since I was 2½ years old. I've just made new friends last year.

The difference between new and old friends is I can tell my old friends things that I've never told anyone about myself and don't have to worry about them telling anyone.

I'm not to sure about my new friends. I'm afriad I might tell them a secret about myself and they tell everyone in this school.

Some of my new friends I can trust, like Tammie. We have just known eachother for 2½ years and already we're just like sisters. We're both in the 7th grade and we share secrets about boys and lot's of other things.

I've known NaTousha since I was 4 now I'm 13. We can't share anything about our life because of her 5 year old brother. He calles himself a spy, he listens to what you say and goes back to act like a news brief.

The difference between new friends and old friends is that you can trust friends that you've known 2-3 better

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

than the friends you've only known for 2-5 months.

Score Point 3: The paper develops one idea somewhat elaborately, that conversation with old and new friends varies and depends upon trust. The use of simile ("to act like a news brief") gives a sense of sophistication and indicates control of the written language. The writer states general differences between old and new friends and refers to specific friends as examples.

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = PAPERS AT THIS LEVEL ARE CONSISTENT, ORGANIZED AND CONTAIN ELABORATED, INFORMATIVE PRESENTATIONS OF WHAT IS ALIKE AND/OR WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT OLD AND NEW FRIENDS WITH SOME ALLUSION TO THE OTHER SIDE. THESE RESPONSES ARE UNIFIED AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. RESPONSES IN THE "4" CATEGORY WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES:

- o Virtually no inconsistencies, digressions, or needless repetitions.
- o Overall fluency in the expression of ideas. In addition, these papers often contain some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as especially apt or striking words, phrases, or expression of thought. These papers may take "compositional risks."
- o A clear sense of order and completeness, as evidenced by effective use of transitional, introductory, and concluding elements.

Old friends seem like they are related to you. You can talk to them about almost everything. When you are feeling down or upset all you have to do is call them up and tell them how you feel. You don't have to worry if they tell everyone because if they are really your friend they will not tell. You really need this in a person.

When you go to your old friends house you don't feel as odd as you would if you went to a new friends house. When you go to an old friends house you feel like you are in your own home, but when you are at a new friends house you sometimes feel like the parents don't like you.

Old friends and new friends are sometimes alike because they both make you feel good when you are feeling bad even if you don't tell them what is wrong.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

With new friends you can lie to them and they would never Know it. Even though you are not supposed to lie. But if you lie to an old friend they can tell right away because they know your attitudes.

If you need help in life you probably could trust an old friend even if it was life or death. But with new friends they would most likely let you down.

With old friends if something was wrong with you they would tell you and forget about it. New friends would tell you and probably make fun of you.

Both old and new friend are nice people.

STOP

Score Point 4: There is an overall fluency of expression in this paper. No inconsistencies or repetitions are present and there is effective use of transition (but, even though, because). The writer presents an organized and elaborate expression of ideas and clearly informs the reader of likenesses and differences.

Friends

My new friends andold friend are somewhat alike. But they do have differences. My old friends and new friend are alike in many ways. For example, they both like to invite me to their homesand play. They both like to come to my house. My new friends and old friends are kind of shy to talk to my parents or even walk in the house. Usually they both want me to do what they do. They make all the plans and decide onwhat we're going to do. They also like to eat very much. Those are about the only things they do that are similiar.

They do have some differences. My old friends usuallydo what ever they want. New friends won't do this. They'll wait around and see what I do. new friends at first, won't go to my house after about two weeks. Old friends usually go every day. My new friends usually eat fast. My old friends will eat very slow and talk alot. When you

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

finish eating they'll usually tell me to get more to eat. My new friends never ask me for anything. My old friends are always asking me to do something for them.

So new friends and old friends are similar in some ways and different in others.

Score Point 4: This paper is an elaborated and informative presentation of what is alike and what is different about old and new friends. Effective use of such adverbs of time as usually, always, at first, and never indicates fluency of expression and control of language. There is a clear sense of order. There is some repetition but it serves to emphasize and does not distract the reader.

STOP

Friends

I have a lot of friends, some of them I have known eversince the first grade and others whom I have just met. I think they are alike in some ways and different in other ways.

Old friends are people who I feel like I've known forever. I can depend on them to help me when I have a problem and they can depend on me. Old friends give each other the support they need to keep going when something has gone really bad. I can trust almost all of my old friends not to repeat the things I tell them that I don't want anyone else to know and they can trust me. I know how they are feeling inside by how they act, look, or talk and most of my friends can tell the, same about me.

New friends can be fun because when you first meet you don't know anything about eachother. I think its neat when you meet someone new because you can learn about their

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

interest with old friends. Sometimes old friends feel left out when you meet someone new so you should introduce your new friends to the old ones, and together you can learn to trust each other and share eachothers inner secrets

Old and new friends are people I can have a special relationship with, we go places together and do things with eachother. We can share our interest and adapt to new interest that one of us has learnt through a new friend. We can trust eachother not to tell our secrets or our feelings to other people.

I have fun with both, my new friends and all my old friends.

STOP

Score Point 4: This paper contains a well-organized, elaborated, and informative presentation with effective use of introductory and concluding elements. There is fluency of expression and a clear sense of completeness. Word choice is excellent. The classification of old and new friends is balanced.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = THESE PAPERS ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE ASSIGNMENT. THEY INCLUDE:

- Papers that do not respond to the required task, regardless of how well organized and free from mechanical errors they may be. The papers may be so vague that it is not apparent to a reader that the writer attempted to address the task assigned, or they may be off the topic.
- Papers that respond only to the fact of the assignment. An example is a response that merely states, "I hate this test." Some students, however, may preface their compositions in this way and continue with their responses. In these cases, the papers are eligible for the entire range of scores.
- Papers in which the student has merely written a word or a brief phrase with no indication of an attempt to attend to the task.
- Papers that are incoherent. In these papers, the handwriting may be legible, but the spelling and/or word order are so confused that it is impossible to determine whether the writer was attempting to address the topic.
- Papers that reply "I don't know."
- Papers that merely copy or paraphrase the assignment.
- Papers that are illegible.
- Papers that are written in a language other than English. If the paper is written entirely in a language other than English, it should not be scored, even if the reader can understand the language written. However, if enough of the paper is written in English so that the reader can determine that the response is on topic, the paper is scorable and should receive a score of at least "1."
- Blank papers.

TEAMS

TEXAS EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

OF MINIMUM SKILLS

Scoring Guide

For Persuasive/Descriptive Writing at the Secondary Level

Texas Education Agency
Division of Student Assessment

Introduction

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. This purpose may be achieved through various methods or modes of organization.* Three purposes and three modes have been identified as appropriate for measurement on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests. These include:

Purpose

- o Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.
- o Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.
- o Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence an audience. However, one purpose is generally primary with others subordinate to the main purpose. In the TEAMS tests, written composition items are designed to focus as much as possible on a single purpose which is clearly stated or implied in the item.

Mode

- o Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.
- o Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and qualities of an idea or object.
- o Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.

While each of these modes can be identified clearly, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of TEAMS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so they will use that method of organization in their responses.

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Scoring the Written Compositions

A process called "focused holistic scoring" has been developed to assess the TEAMS written composition. The scoring system is "holistic" because the total piece of writing is considered. It is "focused" because the writing is evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- Organize ideas in writing
- Respond appropriately to purpose and audience in a given writing situation

Since the responses elicited in TEAMS are first-draft compositions, problems with writing mechanics, such as punctuation and spelling, are considered only if they are so serious that they interfere with the communication of the writer's ideas. The scoring criteria take into account the student's developmental capabilities and the constraints of the testing situation.

Each composition is scored independently by two trained readers who assign the paper a score of 0 (low) to 4 (high). If the two scores do not match, the paper is given to a third reader, who also evaluates the response independently. If the third score matches one of the previously assigned scores, this matched score becomes the paper's score. If the third score does not match either of the other two, the paper is given to the scoring director for resolution.

APPLICATION OF THE CRITERIA TO PERSUASIVE/DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Organize Ideas in Writing

Organization of ideas in persuasive/descriptive writing is characterized by the extent to which students present reasons in support of their point of view. In successful responses these reasons will be clearly developed, elaborated, and presented in a logical order. Most successful responses will contain introductory and concluding statements, and transitional elements will be used effectively.

Respond Appropriately to Purpose and Audience

Since the purpose of this task is persuasion, students are expected to present reasons to influence the specified audience to take a desired course of action. The reasons should be appropriate for the audience.

Inappropriate reasons include:

- those that advocate unlawful acts
- those that contain obscene language
- those that advocate lewdness
- those that are blatantly contrary to general school policy

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITERS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

Use of Language

The responses are not to be judged on the mechanical aspects of writing, i.e., spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage, except when these errors impair meaning. However, the aspects of writing which deal with the way ideas are expressed are considered in determining the student's score. In better responses reasons will be presented clearly , and ideas will flow smoothly. These papers will be relatively free of awkward phrases, choppy sentences, and confusing sentence constructions. Likewise, better responses will be characterized by a highly effective and precise choice of words.

Changes in Position

The overall effectiveness of a persuasive response is determined by the extent to which the writer presents convincing arguments for his/her position. A response in which a student fails to take a position by skirting the issue or by presenting more than one side of an issue is ineffective in its persuasion. The student's score will be affected on a response of this type.

Constraints of the Testing Situation

When scoring student responses, readers take into account the constraints of the testing situation. Students are asked to produce a composition without the benefit of prewriting activities such as class discussion and teacher-directed activities. These factors are especially important since they impose conditions on the student which are different from the instructional setting for writing.

The compositions are scored as "first-draft" attempts. Even "4" papers will contain errors and lapses that would likely not be present if students had time to rewrite, revise, and edit their writing. Students are permitted to organize their thoughts and make notes in their test booklets before they begin to write. However, students are not permitted to recopy their compositions. Students are not permitted to use dictionaries or other reference materials when composing their responses.

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Descriptions of Score Points and Sample Papers

As specified in Subchapter O, Chapter 21, Section 21.556 of the Texas Education Code "...the State Board of Education...shall insure the security of the instruments..." Though the TEAMS written composition items must remain secure, the item included in this publication is similar in difficulty and format to TEAMS items designed to elicit persuasive/descriptive writing from secondary school students.

The papers presented are actual student responses to the item collected during a recent field test. These samples are typical of the types of papers ninth graders write in the actual TEAMS testing situation.

Sample Prompt

Your school wants to add a new course. Your principal has asked for suggestions. Write a letter to your principal telling what course you would add and give convincing reasons for your choice.

Dear Principal:

SCORE POINT 1

1 = THESE PAPERS ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO THE TASK BUT FAIL TO RESPOND IN A MANNER THAT IS MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF PAPERS FALL INTO THIS "1" CATEGORY:

- o Papers that list or discuss courses in general or give an encylopedic description of one or more courses.

- o Papers that respond to the stimulus in a skeletal way. These papers may present a choice along with one or more reasons and there may even be some extension to these ideas, but the information and explanation is insufficient to provide a minimally sound case in favor of the course chosen.

- o Papers that are poorly organized. These responses may present reasons in a random or repetitive fashion. They may ramble with no overall organizational strategy, present numerous details which do not enhance their argument, or contain gaps which would force the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts.

- o Responses that exhibit a lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired. The flow of the response is impeded as a result of repeated errors at the word level, the sentence level, or the composition level.

    - oo At the word level there may be repeated errors in spelling basic words, word choice, and usage.

    - oo At the sentence level, syntax may be confused. This occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order or there is an apparent order but the meaning is unclear. It is not appropriate for readers to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences as to the writer's meaning.

    - oo At the composition level, the thoughts are confused to the point where the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say. These papers lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant, repetitious, or nonexistent.

- o Papers in which the reasons presented are inappropriate for the audience. Inappropriate reasons include:

    - oo those that involve unlawful acts
    - oo those that contain obscene language
    - oo those that advocate lewdness
    - oo those that are blatantly contrary to school policy

SAMPLE A

Dear Principal:

I think a course in nursing would be a good subject. Because in the future we will need people to take care of us. If we have this class it will teach the basics in Nursing. And nursing will be a job that computers will not take over.

Sincerely Yours

SCORE: 1

This response contains unelaborated reasons.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Dear Principal:

I think a cosmatology class would be a good course to add.

I think it would help us learn to takecare of our skin and how to use make up correctly. It could also help us on what protiens, vitamens and iron could do for us to keep us healthy.

Sincerely

SCORE: 1

This response presents a sparse list of unelaborated reasons.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE C

Dear Principal:

Hey man, whats going down? You know man I think there should a Rotc course in our school, because like me there's alot of people in school will be joining the military when they get out. And the Rotc will make them prepared for the military and they'll know what there is to be done, and thats why I think there should be a ROTC course in our school

Thank you

SCORE: 1

This response presents two bare unelaborated reasons.

The response indicates a lack of attention to the specified audience.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Dear Principal:

I am writing you this letter to make some suggestions about our new course. I think it would be real neat if we had a class for modeling I know a bunch of girls who would like to have modeling as a school subject. I understand that you have to consider the boys too. The boys might not want that so another suggestion would be French. I've always want to learn French, and not alot of schools have it so it would be an experiance.

Sincerly

SCORE: 1

The writer presents two suggestions for new courses but does not effectively elaborate either suggestion. The information presented is not sufficient to present a convincing argument.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Dear Principal:

I think as a student at we should have a ROTC. So that we may have skill in the future

SCORE: 1

The response is brief, skeletal, and not convincingly elaborated.

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IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 2

2 = THESE PAPERS ACHIEVE AT LEAST MINIMAL SUCCESS WITH THE PERSUASIVE TASK BY OFFERING A CHOICE ALONG WITH REASON(S) AND DISCOURSE SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THAT CHOICE AT A MINIMAL LEVEL. THEY EXHIBIT MOST OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- o A minimally sufficient amount of evidence must be provided in support of the course chosen. This can be accomplished in one of three ways:
    - oo The paper presents one moderately elaborated reason for the choice.
    - oo The paper presents two or more reasons for the choice, with at least one reason somewhat elaborated.
    - oo The paper presents a lengthy set of unelaborated reasons, the very number of which provides minimally sufficient support for the selection.

  Elaboration is achieved through such devices as example, comparison, description, detail, and personal anecdote, as well as through logical explanation of the reason. For moderate elaboration, the reason must be explained or described enough to make its basis and implications clear, though perhaps not explicit.

- o A rudimentary organizational strategy is apparent, but minor gaps and/or repetitions occur, so that the logical progression of the response is at times disrupted.

- o Some control of written language is demonstrated. These responses may contain simplistic phrasing or syntax, convoluted sentence structure, and/or awkward word choice.

- o At least a minimal awareness of an audience and the persuasive task is evident.

SAMPLE F

Dear Principal:

I think the idea of adding a new course is a good one. I have a few suggestions but, the best one, I think, is the addition of an off-season basketball program.

Students shouldn't be kept from playing basketball just because they don't play football, after-all, our school has an off-season football program, so why not have an off-season basketball program.

Another reason for having an off-season basketball program is to have a well rounded off and complete athletic program. If we developed our skills in basketball as well as football we would have better standings.

SCORE: 2

This response presents several somewhat elaborated reasons.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE G

Dear Principal:

I am suggesting that you start a financial ~~network~~ management class, where all kids work outside the school, get money + learn, how to manage it. They would pay for rent, food, and other necessiti out of what they made. This could help unemployment, + helps the kids get an edge on life. They wouldn't really pay for rent or necessities. it would just be taken away + put into a savings account until the end of the year. This course is geared for Jrs + Seniors who are about to graduate. They could keep the money which is left so that they could learn how to manage it.

SCORE: 2

This response presents one reason elaborated through the illustration of course content and participants.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE H

Dear Principal:

I strongely belive that our school should have a very sound course on computers. In our world today more and more things are run by computers and more people own computers. People use them at home, at work, and at play. Many good jobs these days require some contact with computers. In order for the students to get a good job they will need to know something about computers. They will need to know a little of how it is made and constructed, how to operate it, and what it can do.

I hope this letter will convince you of the importance to know about computers and to have a computer course available for students in this school.

Sincerely,

SCORE: 2

This response presents a set of somewhat elaborated reasons. The response is well organized but it is not sufficiently elaborated for a "3."

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Dear Principal:

I think exclusive reading Courses should be added. People need to be able to read in order to make through this world. Alot of people need to read and build up their skills. A reading course would improve ones reading ability. Many Americans cant sit down and read a newspaper, becuse when they were in school they didn't learn to read. People need to understand the facts of What the, author is trjing to say. People just sit down and read something but do not understand what they just read. So you can see why this course should be added

SCORE: 2

This response contains an apparent organizational strategy. The reasons presented are somewhat elaborated. Sentence structure is simplistic and word choice is awkward.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE J

Dear Principal:

I would like to suggest that the school should offer photography as an elective for anyone who would like to take it and not just for the annual staff. There are a lot of students who would like to take it, so they can be a better photographer when they get older. It will also help them get more involved with nature, people and get to know more about sports. Please consider my suggestion.

SCORE: 2

Though brief, this response presents several somewhat elaborated reasons.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE K

Dear Principal:

I think that a swimming course should be added to the curiculum of the high school students. It woul be very educational and could help some people to ~~mabey~~ mabye gain self-confidence. Not only that, but swimming is also the best physical exersize there is. ~~Not~~ Also I think that the ~~stud~~ other students would enjoy it very much and mabye become better friends. So in conclusion I think that swimming course ~~woud~~ ~~would~~ should be added to the high school ~~corse~~ courses.

anonomeys

SCORE: 2

This response contains a set of unelaborated reasons, which when combined provide support for the stated choice. Phrasing and syntax are simplistic.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

3 = THESE PAPERS ACHIEVE MODERATE SUCCESS WITH THE PERSUASIVE TASK BY STATING A CHOICE SUPPORTED WITH REASON(S) THAT ARE MODERATELY DEVELOPED. THE IDEAS ARE GENERALLY WELL ORGANIZED AND ARE SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR THAT THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THESE PAPERS EXHIBIT MOST OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- o A moderate amount of evidence must be provided in support of the course chosen. This can be accomplished in one of three ways:
    - oo The paper presents one fully elaborated reason--i.e., a reason elaborated sufficiently to be clearly understood and convincing.
    - oo The paper presents two or more moderately elaborated reasons.
    - oo The paper presents a lengthy set of reasons, of which one is moderately elaborated, or several are somewhat elaborated.
- o A consistent organizational pattern is apparent, although brief gaps, repetitions, or digressions may occur.
- o Control of written language is demonstrated by clarity of expression, effective word choice, and transitions between ideas.
- o There is a clear sense of audience and persuasive task.

Dear Principal:

I've given alot of thought on the matter of the new course the school wants to add to our schedule. I strongly feel that we need a beginners and intermediate computer course. With the advancing of technology, and the many different computer-related jobs, I feel it's only logical to add the computer course.

Many students enter college without any computer knowledge at all, they have to take these courses in college whereas they could have taken them in highschool and saved alot of time and money.

Many of my fiends take summer computer courses at colleges, but since we don't have a college in our city, it's very costly and time-consuming.

But then, there's always the question on how we're going to get the money to buy these computters. Well, I've thought about that too. The student council could arrange it so that the 9th and 10th grade classes could join together in the selling of trashbags. Since trashbags are useful and economical, customers wouldn't mind as bad supporting our fund raising activity.

The school could start out just allowing the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

gifted and talented to participate untill
we can raise enough money to buy some
more computers.
I would be very grateful if you
would take my opinions and think about
them, because I really would like to help
expand the horizons of our school

Sincerely.

SCORE: 3

This response is well organized and moderately well elaborated. The writer's solution for the cost problem may be viewed as an elaboration of one of his/her reasons.

STOP

SAMPLE M

Dear Principal:

I think you should consider having a martial arts course. It would benefit those who are interested in the course. Having a martial arts course would include a number of things that a person could choose from. Karate, Judo and kick-boxing are just a few things that a person could choose from. People would be able to defend themselves more aggressively. Students who want to take a marttial arts course would not have to wait till after school or until school is out. Students would have to pay a fee to join the martia arts course. This money would be used to hire a qualified instructor. Students would feel better knowing they have had extensive training in the martial arts. Teachers could also benefit from the course. There would be after school meetings for those who wouldn't have enough time during school. There would be differing stages and age limits in certain classes to asure that people would not get hurt. I think having a martial arts course would be more than helpful to

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

High School.

SCORE: 3

The writer weaves the "how to" with the "why" to produce a moderately well developed response.

STOP

SAMPLE N

Dear Principal:

I would like to add an optometry course. I think students should learn more things about the eye. There is not enough information about the eye in a health book. Students should learn about different medications for the eye. If the students knew more about the different medications, they would be more careful of what medications they use. Students at ________ High are aware of the fact of becoming blind. They think that if they were not born blind, they will not be blind. If the student body knew more things about the eye than they do, they would be alot more careful. We would be alot more interested in studing about the eye, and all parts of the eye. Know about the things that can cause blindness.

Thank You

Sincerely,

SCORE: 3

The writer uses detailed explanation and illustration to achieve moderate elaboration.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE O

Dear Principal:

I think the idea for adding a new course is excellent. I would choose a course which teaches things like how to keep a checkbook, financing, and other matters having to do with money. Many students do not have a good idea of how to do this. Some parents do not teach their children how to handle money. If a person who has just graduated from high school doesn't know how, it could create some problems. Many students leave home as soon as they graduate and have no one to show them how. If they could practice keeping records of their money while still in school, there would be less chance of making a mistake later on in life.

Some students have a checking account while they are in junior high and high school. These students need to know how to handle their money correctly while they are still in school.

I hope my suggestion has been helpful. I believe handling money correctly is very important. Please consider adding this as a course.

Sincerely,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 3

Although control of language is good and several moderately developed reasons are presented, the response does not contain sufficient elaboration for a "4."

STOP

SAMPLE P

Dear Principal:

I feel that more and broader languages should be offered at this school. Examples of such languages are Russian and korean. My main reason for suggesting the addition of these languages is that in the future, the different countries would have to be able to communicate with us and as it is now, probably not very many people would know and speak the other language. The other country's people might know our language but that would seem to me as being a bit one sided and that we were trying to avoid communicating with them. One more reason I have for these suggestions is that these particular languages would be quite interesting, in my point of view anyway, to learn and it might bring the different cultures and peoples of the world closer together with everybody as one cooperating world.

Sincerely,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 3

This response contains a clear organizational pattern; however, it does not exhibit fluency in the expression of ideas to the extent necessary for a "4."

STOP

Dear Principal:

I am writting to you to help you suggest a new course in school. I would suggest a computer class, because this world is begging to be One Big Computer.

Computers are a better course to Choose, because when you get out of school and go into college you'll Know all about them, not exactly everything, but you'll be experienced.

I've noticed that many Companys are using computers now a days, so I think the Kids here in school should start getting some experience with the machines.

Many schools around this area are buying computers for their schools, and it has really turned out great for them.

I think that a Course of Computers Would help me a lot!

Thank
You,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE: 3

This response is a low "3." Several moderately developed reasons are presented and the response contains an apparent organizational strategy.

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = THESE PAPERS ACHIEVE SUCCESS WITH THE PERSUASIVE TASK BY MAKING A CHOICE AND PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THAT CHOICE THROUGH REASONS SOME OF WHICH ARE CLEARLY AND FULLY DEVELOPED. THE REASONS ARE PRESENTED IN A LOGICAL ORDER AND ARE EXPRESSED WELL. THESE PAPERS EXHIBIT MOST OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Sufficient elaboration of reasons to make them clearly understood and to be convincing in support of the writer's stated choice. If only one reason is given, it must be thoroughly developed.
- A clear sense of order and completeness, as evidenced by effective use of transitional, introductory, and concluding elements.
- Absence (for the most part) of gaps, inconsistencies, digressions, or needless repetitions.
- Overall fluency in the expression of ideas.

In addition, these papers often contain some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

- Highly effective word choice, including especially apt or striking words, phrases, or expression of thought.
- Particularly descriptive details or illuminating illustrations.
- Especially thoughtful reasons that offer an unusual perspective or a broader view of the situation.
- An unusual persuasive strategy that is carefully carried through.

SAMPLE R

Dear Principal:

I am writing you in response to your request for suggestions on putting a new class into effect. I am personaly convinced that we should have a course teaching a specific atheletic event, such as tennis or swimming. This should not be confused with competitive sports or a gym-type situation. This course would specificaly teach students the basics & later the more advanced elements of tennis, swimming, etc. This is a good suggestion because many people do want this type of course. There are many students who do not know how to play tennis but would dearly like to learn. Also many of my colleagues do not know how to swim & thus feel ostracized at many of the various summer activities. The need & desire for such a course is present. It should also be noted that such a course would enhance both the physical & social aspects of the student. This course would allow many "unfit" students to become involved in a method of good exercise. Their social skills will be enhanced by opening up new areas of activity. The last reason for considering such a course is that it would improve the schools image. Ceartainly the students of a school are the indicators of its quality &

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

students with broader more varied abilities would be seen as a good reflection on the school. I thank you for your time + beg of you to consider my proposal.

Yours Truly

SCORE: 4

This response is well elaborated and the reasons presented are convincing and developed evenly.

STOP

Dear Principal:

I have a suggestion concerning the addition of a new course. Personally, I think that the students in this school would benefit greatly from teachings of study skills. Many of the students want to improve their grades, but don't know how to accomplish this.

By teaching note taking, memorization, and test taking skills; students could do better, gradewise. These skills would also be of great value in college.

Many students don't like to take notes, or find such a task as very boring. In my own opinion, when one does not know how to accomplish a task well; one does not put out the effort to do so. My point is that if these students learned the basic skills of easy note taking, they would apply them. Thus, students would learn more from lectures.

Some students "cram" before an exam. This is due to the fact that they believe they'll forget what they study prior to the exam, well, a little bit of knowledge concerning memorizati is what they need. This skill would enable them to store and keep information in their minds This is a basic skill that would be useful throughout life.

Test time is also a problem for some.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Students should be taught how to prepare for exams. Tests could be passed more succesfully. Again, this skill would prove to be beneficial in college.

Hopefully, you can see that the addition of a new course should be of benefit to all students. I think study skills would be the answer to many students' questions of ways of raising grade Please consider these basic skills as a possible new course for our students.

Thanks,

9th Grade

SCORE: 4

The response is fluent and a clear sense of order and completeness pervades the piece of writing. Each reason is well developed. Introductory and concluding elements are used effectively.

STOP

SAMPLE T

Dear Principal:

March 21, 1984

I think that Computer Science should be the new course. Since the school all ready owns computers the cost of the new course should only be text books. Mr. could teach the course because he already teaches Computer Literacy.

Right now the only follow up of Computer Literacy is a half year Computer Math course. Computer Science could follow up Computer Literacy at a higher level.

The world today is becoming more and more computerized. In the future there will be a need to know a little computer science. Many of the students at High are planning on going to college. These students will find college computer classes much easier if they take one year of Computer Science while they are in high school.

All computer classes right now are very popular. I feel that some of the other proposed new courses would not draw a full class, but I am sure that Computer Science would be a full class every year. Some of the other classes would not serve all of the high school. Computer Science is something that we will all need in the future.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SAMPLE T cont.

For this reason I think the new course should be Computer Science.

Sincerly yours,

SCORE: 4

Though this response does not contain "striking words", it is well-organized and well elaborated.

STOP

Dear Principal:

I feel that architecture should be the course added to our highschool courses. I feel this way for four main reasons By taking architecture, the student has a background for a career. Architecture also could take the role of advanced drafting. Architecture is used in everyday life. Finally, coaches wouldn't need to teach drafting. In this letter, I hope to explain and convince you of my reasoning.

By taking architecture, the student has a background for a career. Other courses give this background also but I feel that architecture would give a total of more students a good chance at a good living after graduation. Architecture is an outstanding career background.

Architecture takes the role of advanced drafting. Some students still wish to take drafting after the given 2 years. I am not saying that architecture is a "Drafting III" but instead, a way to put drafting to use. Students would enjoy taking architecture as they do drafting.

Architecture is used in everyday life. People read house blueprints everyday. New buildings seem to always be going up. Architecture is in demand and courses in it would greatly help.

Finally, coaches wouldn't be needed to teach drafting. Teachers could be hired to teach drafting and architecture. In actuality, coaches wouldn't have enough time to teach both courses. With 4 periods of drafting and 2 of architecture, when would he get to coach? I am merely suggesting that drafting and architecture,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

if allowed, be tought by the same teacher.

In conclusion, I would like to state that architecture would be a good course to add because of its career involvement, importance, and employment solutions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

SCORE: 4

The response is fluent and specific. The reasons are convincing and well elaborated and the organizational strategy is effective.

STOP

Dear Principal:

In regard to your asking about suggestion of adding a course, I believe a class of Psychology/Psychiatry should be added. A course like this would help students perform better at daily tasks or long range ones. I think it would be a worthwhile course.

Psychology/Psychiatry helps students to better understand themselves and others. It helps them to think more deeply about feelings and lets them become sensitive to their needs. If kids understood themselves, probably life would be easier to deal with.

Psychology/Psychiatry helps students to deal with traumatic life situations. Students these days are under a great deal of pressure and stress. They need to learn how to function under these circumstances. Many kids have suffered through deaths of close ones. It helps to know what is going on inside them mentally.

On the whole Psychology/Psychiatry offers good sound mental health. Your health is not just determined by how physically fit a person is. A great deal of being healthy is mental. If a person has a good understanding of his mental attitudes then he can cope with life much better.

I do believe Psychology/Psychiatry would be an excellent course choice to add to the school. I hope you'll look into this course and give it much thought. It will greatly be

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

appreciated.

Sincerely,

SCORE: 4

Effective use of introductory, transitional, and concluding statements is evident throughout the response. Reasons are fully and clearly developed.

STOP

SAMPLE W

Dear Principal:

The course which I suggest is a computer course. many students are interested in computer writing and how the computer actually works. Computers are becoming wide-spread throughout the world. Computer Technology is the future for which we must begin to prepare for now.

Computers help not only in an office or building but also in the home. They help to manage money, and stabilize a business. Computers can answer questions and also arouse new questions. They help solve problems faster and easier with just a touch of a button.

Computers also help to explain things to someone who needs help in english, or math or any subject. Computers are great to have in a classroom because the student not only becomes wiser at a subject, such as geometry, but wiser in two subjects, geometry and computers at the same time.

As I have stated before in my letter Computers are they future and by denying us the right to have a computer course, you are denying us the right to further are understanding and education. many students may be geniouses on the computer, but then again they may never have the oppurtunity to even work on one. Please, don't stop the students from learning by denying us the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

future.

I hope you will conscider my suggestion and look at all possibilities before you make a decision.

Thank You,

SCORE: 4

The response is concise yet persuasive. The writer makes effective use of an emotional appeal.

STOP

SCORE POINT 0

0 = THESE PAPERS ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE ASSIGNMENT. THEY INCLUDE:

- Papers that do not respond to the required task, regardless of how well organized and free from mechanical errors they may be. The papers may be so vague that it is not apparent to a reader that the writer attempted to address the task assigned, or they may be off the topic. A paper which does not focus on a school course is considered to be off topic.

- Papers that respond only to the fact of the assignment. An example is a response that merely states, "I hate this test." Some students, however, may preface their compositions in this way and continue with their responses. In these cases, the papers are eligible for the entire range of scores.

- Papers in which the student has merely written a word or a brief phrase with no indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

- Papers that are incoherent. In these papers, the handwriting may be legible, but the spelling and/or word order are so confused that it is impossible to determine whether the writer was attempting to address the topic.

- Papers that reply, "I don't know."

- Papers that merely copy or paraphrase the assignment.

- Papers that are illegible.

- Papers that are written in a language other than English. If the paper is written entirely in a language other than English, it should not be scored, even if the reader can understand the language written. However, if enough of the paper is written in English so that the reader can determine that the response is on topic, the paper is scorable and should receive a score of at least "1."

- Blank papers.

PURPOSE
MODE

STRATEGIES for Grades 3 and 5

PART III

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR GRADES 3 AND 5

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.
Grades 3 and 5

This objective requires students to write an informative/descriptive composition in which an object or picture is described in a specific and organized manner to allow the reader to visualize this object or picture.

Instructional Emphases

Specificity is the key to clear description, whether the description is oral or written. Specificity can be achieved through the use of precise words, descriptive adjectives, referential comparisons, or words that indicate location.

Facility in writing description is an essential part of all of the types of writing eligible for testing on TEAMS and of everyday classroom writing assignments. Students should be taught to view stimuli in a photographic sense which they can translate into writing. Guided practice in activities to teach descriptive writing should include the teacher's monitoring of and making suggestions during in-progress writing.

Possible Instructional Activities

Add to My Picture

Have two sets of identical picture cards. Place one stack face down on a desk. Distribute the other stack to individual students. One student picks up the top picture in the stack and describes it in detail. The student who has the duplicate card responds by raising his/her hand and adding to that description. Then that student takes a turn. Repeat the process. Make certain that the children do not merely list objects, but that the objects are located and modified by adjectives and as many other descriptors as possible.

Colorful Word Bank

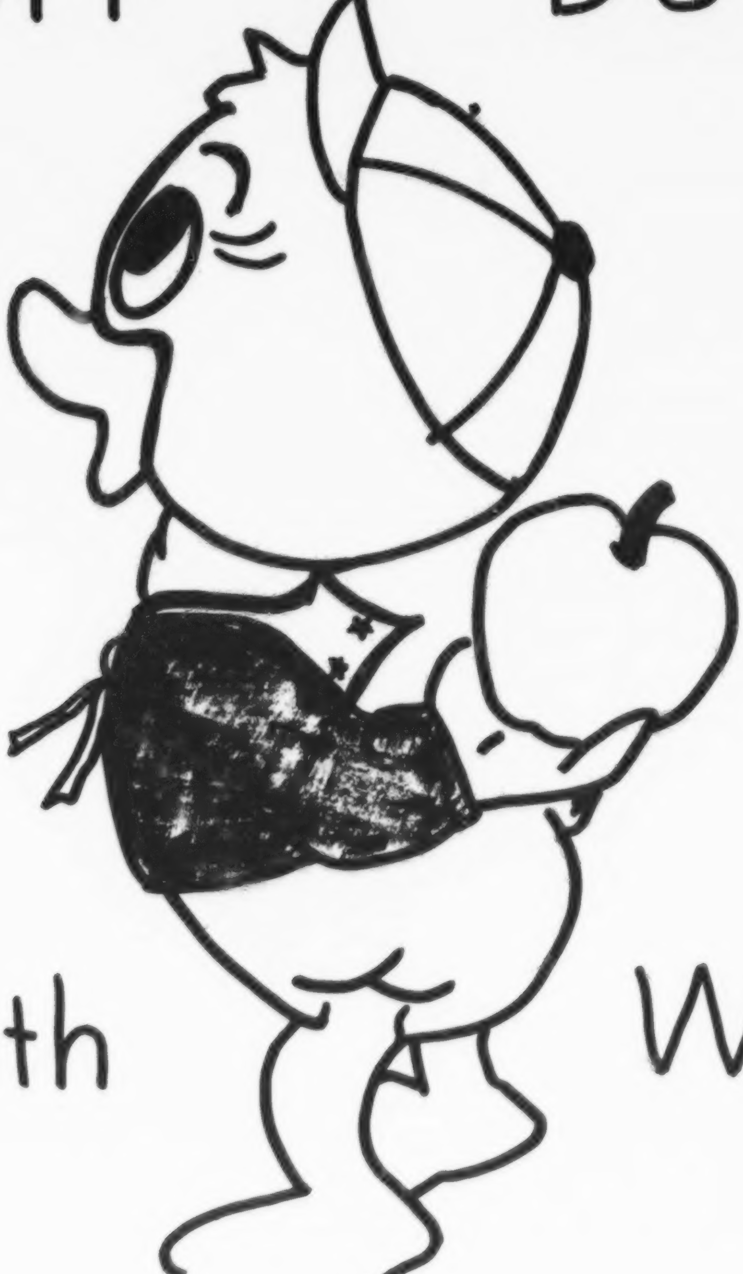
Display several objects from home so that all students can see them. Ask the pupils to begin describing the object of their choice as though they are trying to paint a word picture for someone who can't see the object. As the students give descriptive words, have someone write them on the board to create a word bank. Using as many words as possible from the word bank, students are to write a description of the object.

This lesson should be built around the concept of descriptive adjectives. While one student is reading his or her description to the class, another circles the descriptive words on the chalkboard.

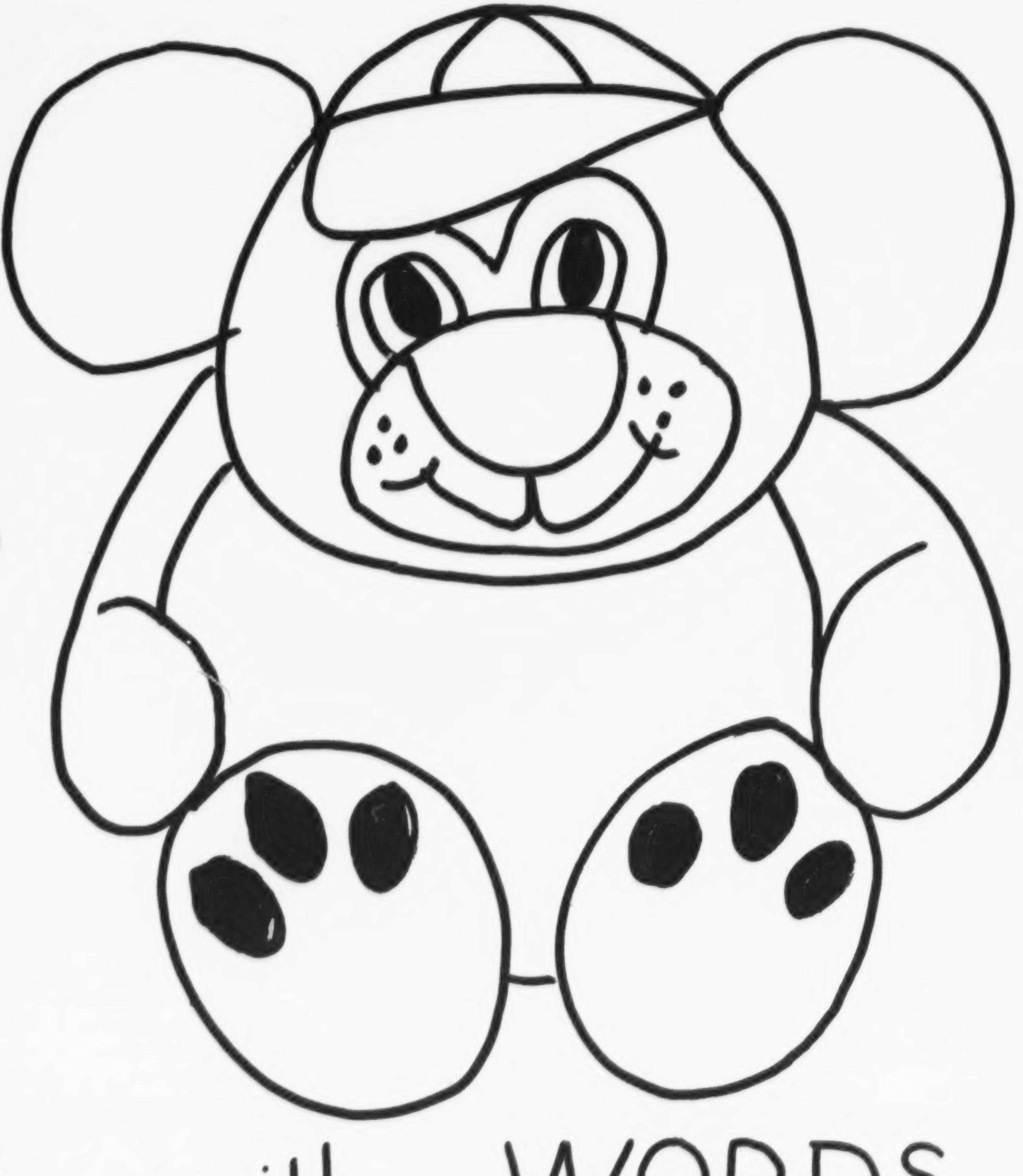
Stuff the Animals

In this exercise brainstorm aloud with students adjectives to describe the various pictures. After doing the activity together orally, ask students to stuff the animals with as many specific descriptive words as possible. For example:

STUFF the DUCK with WORDS

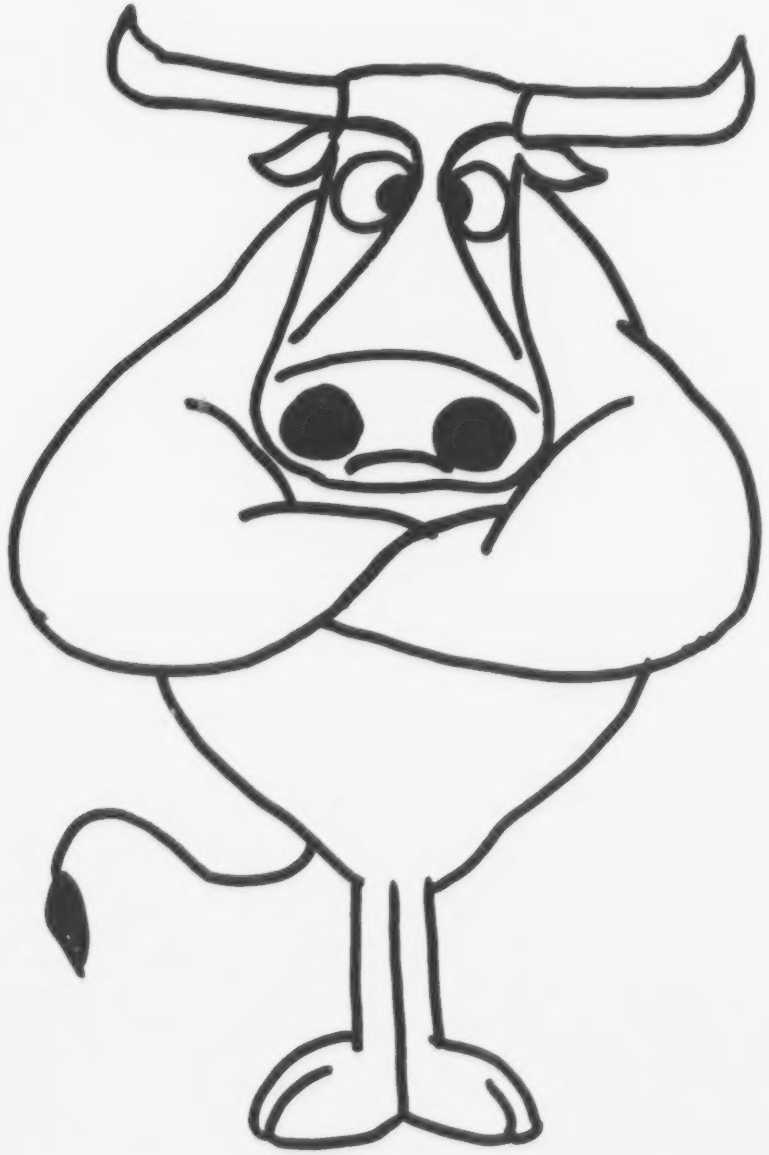


STUFF the BEAR



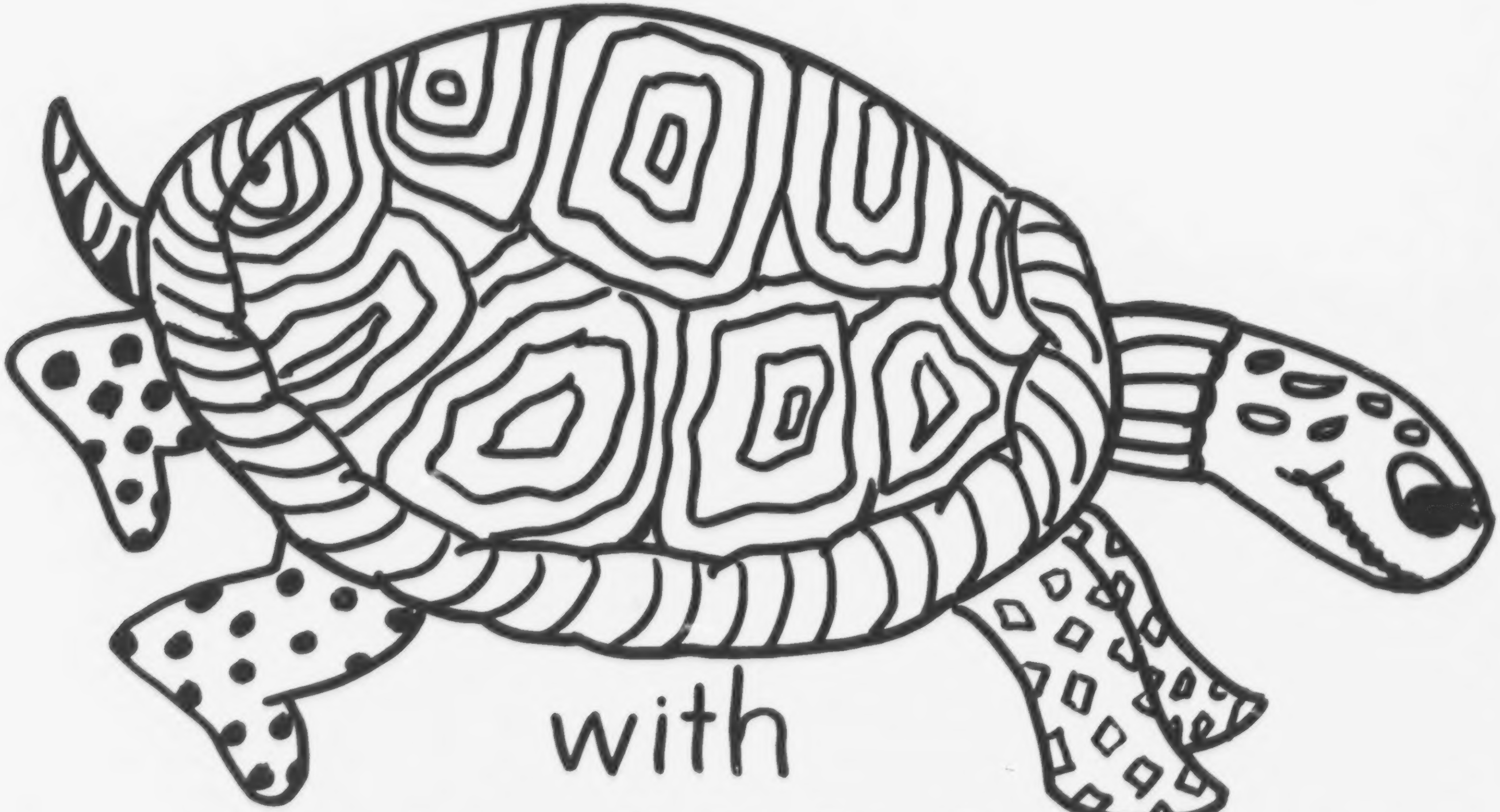
with WORDS.

STUFF the BULL



with WORDS.

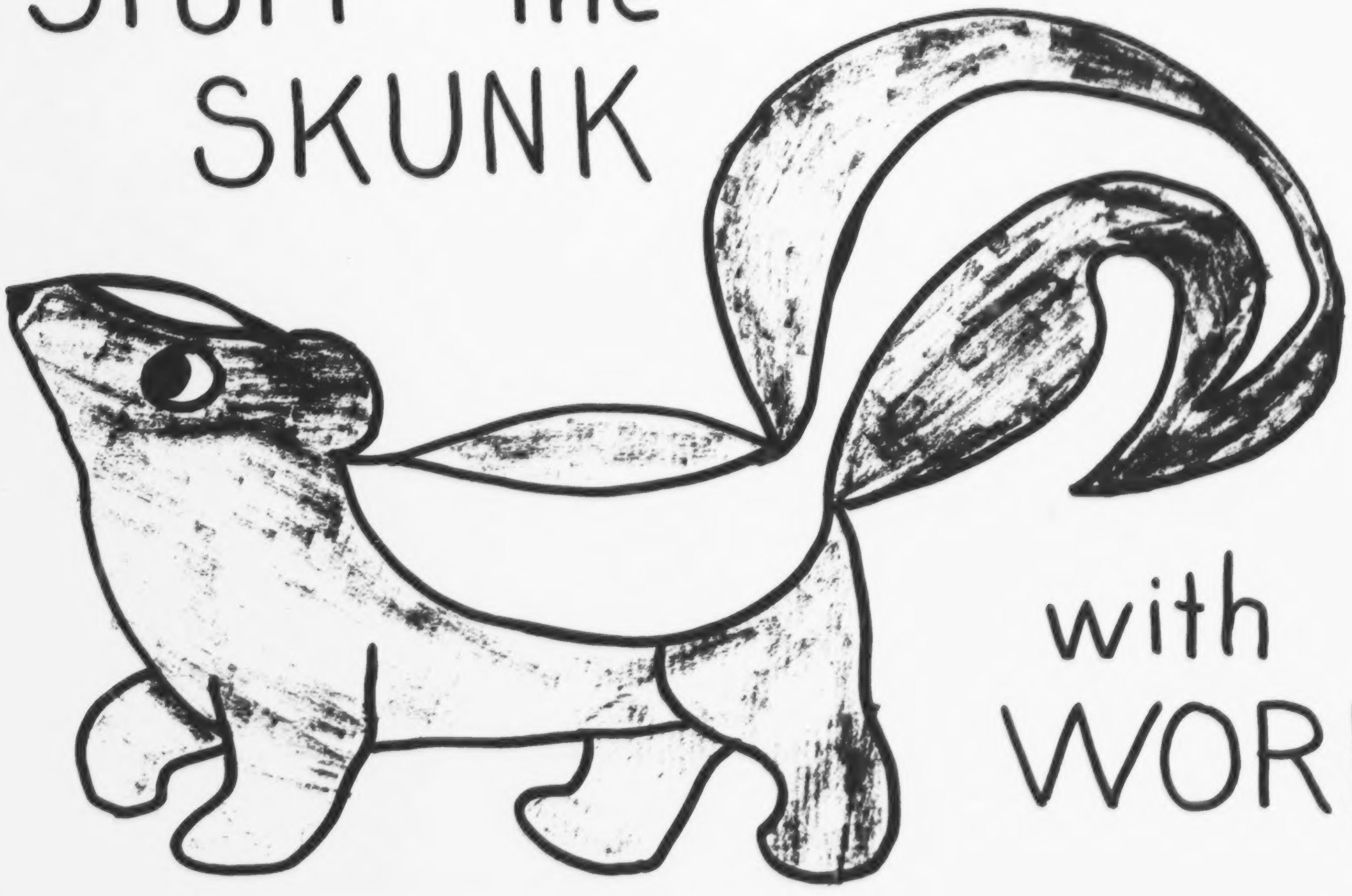
STUFF THE TURTLE



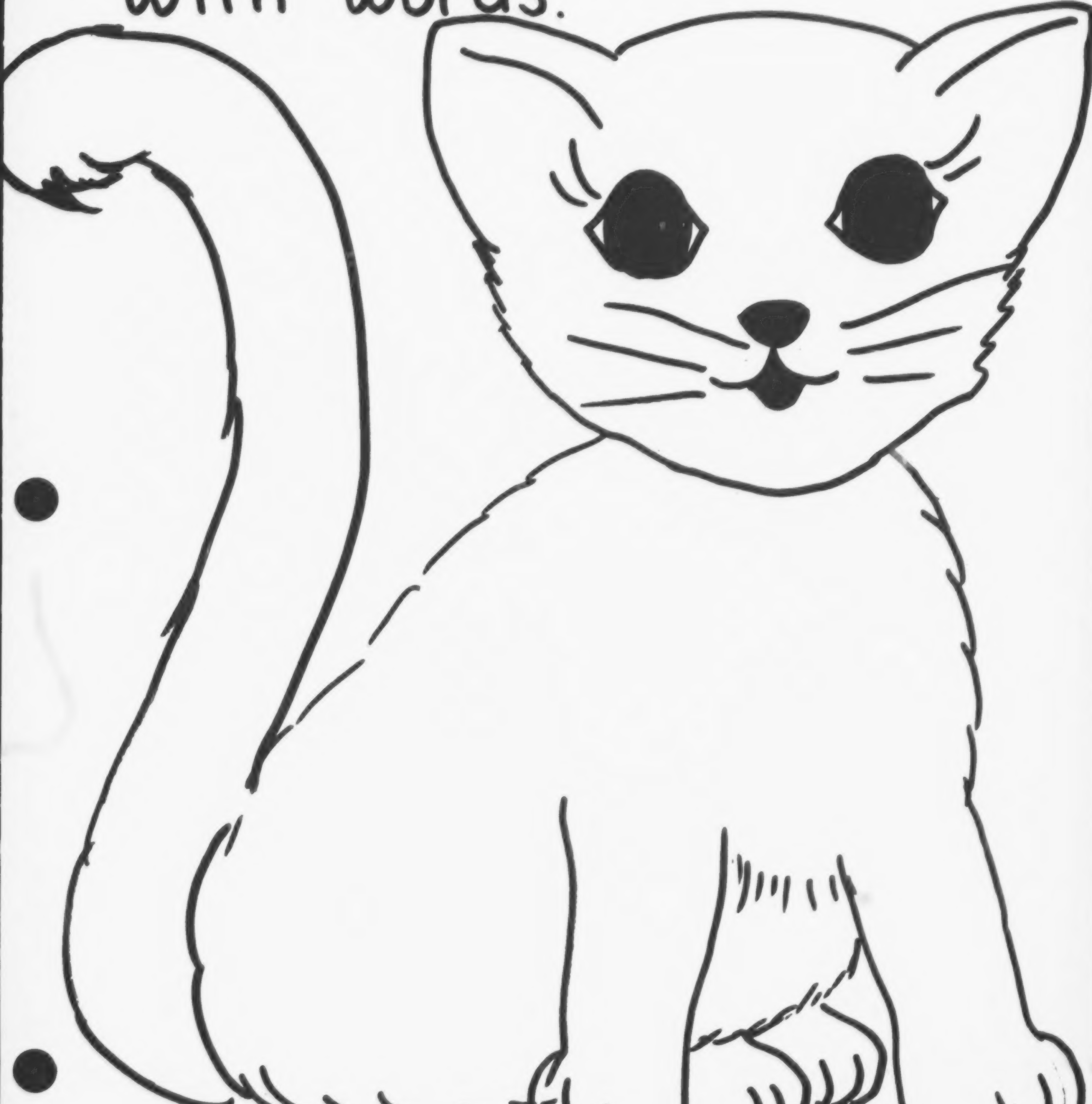
with

WORDS.

STUFF the SKUNK with WORDS.



STUFF THE KITTEN with words.



Mental Pictures

One child faces the back of the room. At the front of the room display a picture. Call upon students to tell what they see in the picture. These pictures may reflect a farm scene, circus scene, a zoo, a park, etc. The student in the back must guess what has been described.

Secret Identities

Ask the student to select secretly a familiar character from literature (such as Huckleberry Finn, Big Jim, Tom Sawyer, Captain Hook, etc.) and write a short description of the unnamed character. Place the "secret identities" on display and have the students give the identity to a "keeper of the key." As students think they know who the character is, they can check with the keeper of the key to see whether their guess is right. Alternatives: Play "Twenty Questions," "What's My Line" or "I've Got a Secret." The latter two are modeled on the old TV shows.

Half and Half

Show a picture of a scene to half of the class. Tell these students that they are to describe this picture to the other half of the class using location of objects in the scene. A student may describe by saying, "In the upper right hand corner of this picture is a window." Another student may state, "Below the window is a large, red, square toy box." Another student may add, "The toy box is filled with old ragged dolls, a broken fire engine and a furry one-eyed teddy bear."

The half of the class which has not seen the picture should draw what other students describe. Drawings may be compared and discussed with regard to clarity and accuracy of location and vividness and precision of descriptive words.

The Spy Game

Collect a set of objects and cover them with a cloth. The game works better if the objects are said to have belonged to a particular person (such as a foreign agent or spy).

Give the students a chance to observe closely the items for a few minutes. Then, on a signal, have them return to their seats and describe in as much detail as possible what they saw. Students should not list characteristics, but should use vivid, descriptive words in describing the objects.

One From Many

Display at least four objects that are similar but are not exactly alike (e.g., houseplants, maps, or different pictures of the same type of animal). Ask students to generate, either orally or in writing, enough specific descriptions for each of the objects so that another person can determine which one of the set of objects is being described. If students write their responses, have them read them to the class while other students guess the described object.

Sounds Around You

Divide the students into four groups. Have two groups go outside (to different areas) and two groups go to different points within the school building. Members of each group will close their eyes and listen to all the sounds around them for a few minutes. After one to two minutes of listening, the children should write down the sounds they have heard.

When the students return, ask them to think of as many words or phrases to describe the sounds they heard. List these on the board. The list will become a word bank on SOUNDS. Children may want to copy the list and add to it on their own or you may keep one classroom list which can be added to periodically.

Adapted from: Koch & Brazil. Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process.

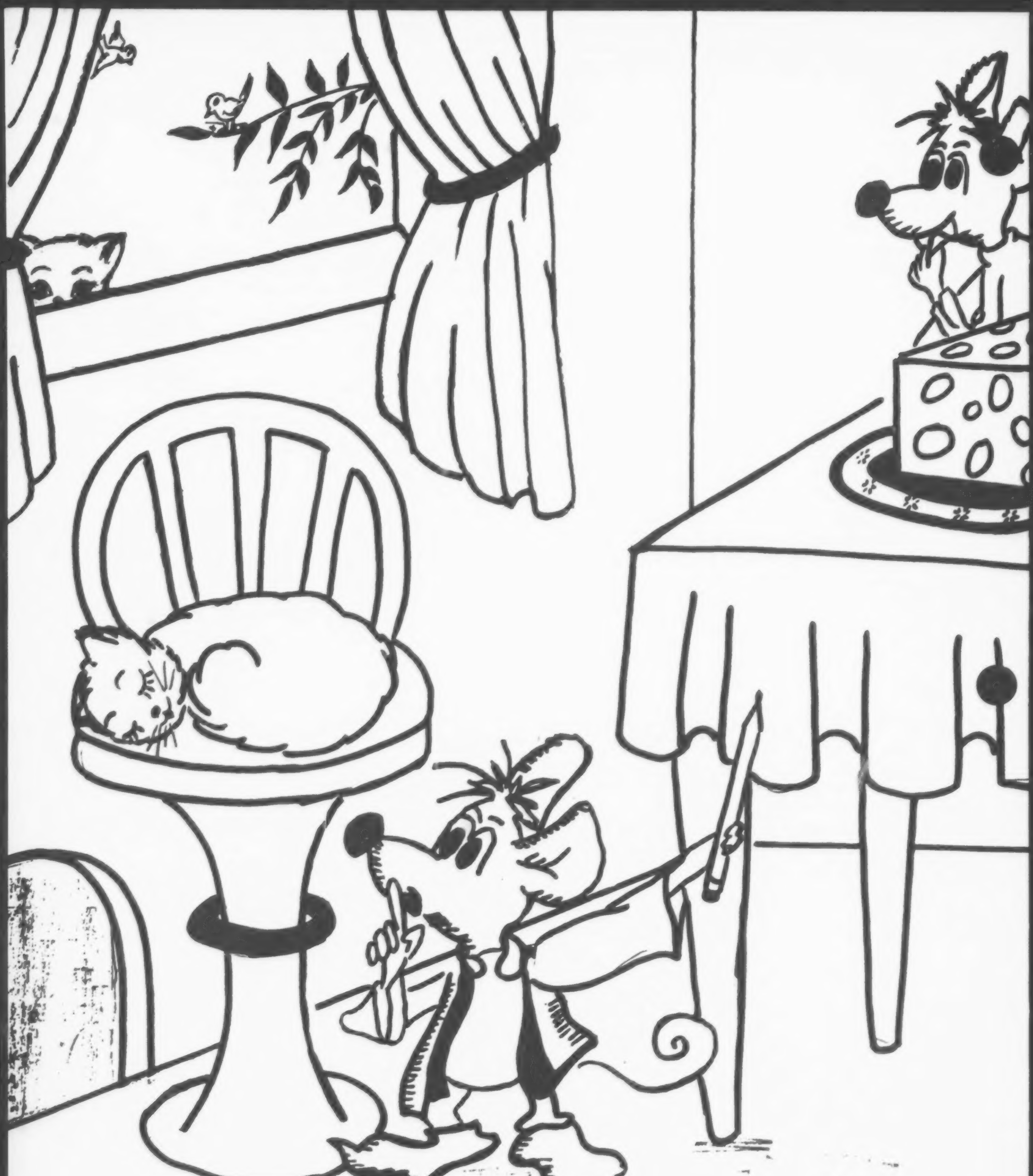
What I Want to Be

Ask the students what they would like to be someday and write their answers on the board. Next ask them for adjectives to describe what they will be and write these on the board also. Talk about the adjectives and next to each adjective write its superlative.

Have the students write three sentences about what they would like to be someday. They should use at least one of the superlative adjectives written on the board and then read their sentences to the rest of the class. Confer with small groups of students to make sure they understand the use of superlatives.

Independent Practice Prompt

Now that students have learned about informative/descriptive writing and have demonstrated mastery in guided practice, they are ready to be assessed on a sample prompt item. Instruct students to: "Look at this picture and describe what you see so that someone else can picture this scene."



Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.
Grades 3 and 5

This objective requires students to write an informative/narrative composition in which a sequence of events that tells how to do something is related.

Instructional Emphases

The key element to this type of writing is the logical sequencing of steps which provides the necessary information to another individual so that he/she can replicate the process. This type of writing has practical applications for science classes, in writing laboratory reports, for home economics classes in writing recipes and in everyday experiences such as providing directions on how to go from the store to the park or how to fix a bicycle.

Possible Instructional Activities

Rise and Shine

Ask several students to pantomime how they get ready for school in the morning. After each one has dramatized how he/she gets ready for school, discuss their actions with the class, using adjectives, phrases, verbs, and similes. List an agreed-upon sequence of events on the board. Choose one student to pantomime the listed sequence. Ask students whether the pantomimed events are being sequenced correctly and whether any of the events is missing.

How Do You Do?

Ask students to write a composition on any of the following:

* how to skip rope
* how to cover a book
* how to go from one place in the school to another place
* how to use a particular piece of playground equipment

Take the class to the appropriate site. Ask a student to follow the directions precisely as they are read by another student. Discuss and modify the directions as needed.

Objective 9: Write a narrative on a specified topic.
Grades 3 and 5

This objective requires students to write an expressive/ narrative composition in which a story is created and related in a sequential manner.

Instructional Emphases

The key element to successful narration is the progression of events through time. Whatever vehicle for relating events is employed, the story line must move from a beginning to an ending. Shifts in time and location, and appearances and disappearances of characters must be explained. Many successful narratives are introduced with a scenario involving conflicts, e.g., a child stranded on a deserted island or an animal in an alien environment. The resolving of the conflict moves the story line. The final resolution of the conflict provides the ending.

Possible Instructional Activities

Modernizing a Fairy Tale

Review the fairy tale Cinderella or have the class read it aloud. Discuss the "rags to riches" theme that prevails in this story, and draw comparisons to other fairy tales in which the theme occurs. Talk about "modernizing" fairy tales and generally what types of revisions of events and their sequences would occur when modernizing a fairy tale such as Cinderella. In small groups, have students plan a modern version of Cinderella. Have each group of students dramatize its story. Following each dramatization conduct a class discussion about the progression of events.

Cliff Hangers

Divide the students into teams of five people and arrange desks in rows of five. Tell the children they will write an exciting story with some help from their classmates. Each child needs a piece of paper on which to write his/her story.

Give these directions to students: "Everyone is going to help write an exciting story." On your paper you are to begin writing a story. You will have three minutes, and you want to try to stop at an exciting place. When I ring the bell, move to the next desk, read the story on the desk and start adding to the story. Each time you will have a little longer time so you can read the story before adding to it. Every time I ring the bell, move to the next desk. When you get back to your own desk, finish the story and add a title.

Let the students illustrate the stories. Attach them by string to coat hangers and let the stories hang from the ceiling.

Creative Comics

Place comic strips cut apart or other commercially prepared sequence-of-activity cards into individual envelopes. Each student receives one envelope and arranges the pictures in the correct sequence. The student then writes a narrative about the comic strip, tape records his narration, and plays it back to the class. Peers offer critiques.

The Further Adventures of...

After reading an episodical book to the class, ask students to write some extra adventures of the main character. Students can work individually or in small groups to extend the story. However, their chapters must parallel the book in terms of time, setting, and characterization. For example, students might add another tale to Judy Blume's Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, or another mystery to an Encyclopedia Brown book by Donald Sobol. Once a new chapter is written, read it aloud to the students during the usual story time.

Let's Create

On an individual basis the students choose a "who," "when," and "where" card from an apron pocket. These cards contain various ideas such as "a purple flamingo," "in your yard," "100 years from now," and so on.

The students take the cards to their seats and make a list of ideas to go along with each card. After a few minutes the students return their cards to the apron and begin drawing pictures of their proposed story.

When the pictures are complete, have the students write three possible starter sentences for their stories. The children share these with a friend and choose the "best" one to begin their stories.

The students are to write stories which tie together the three cards chosen. The stories should entertain classmates and relate to the pictures drawn.

A Puppet, A Puppet

Talk with the students about puppets and encourage them to watch puppet shows on television. Display several types of puppets and books on puppet making for the students to use. Then during an art class help the students to create their own puppets. Once the puppets are finished, ask the students to write a dialogue or a short story for their puppet to present for the class. Give the students suggestions for improvement of the stories or dialogues. These stories or dialogues are rewritten and then performed, with the puppets, for the class.

As an alternative, have the students work in pairs to create a dialogue between their puppets or a little skit. For follow-up, have the students draw a picture for scenery in their presentation.

You're On Candid Camera

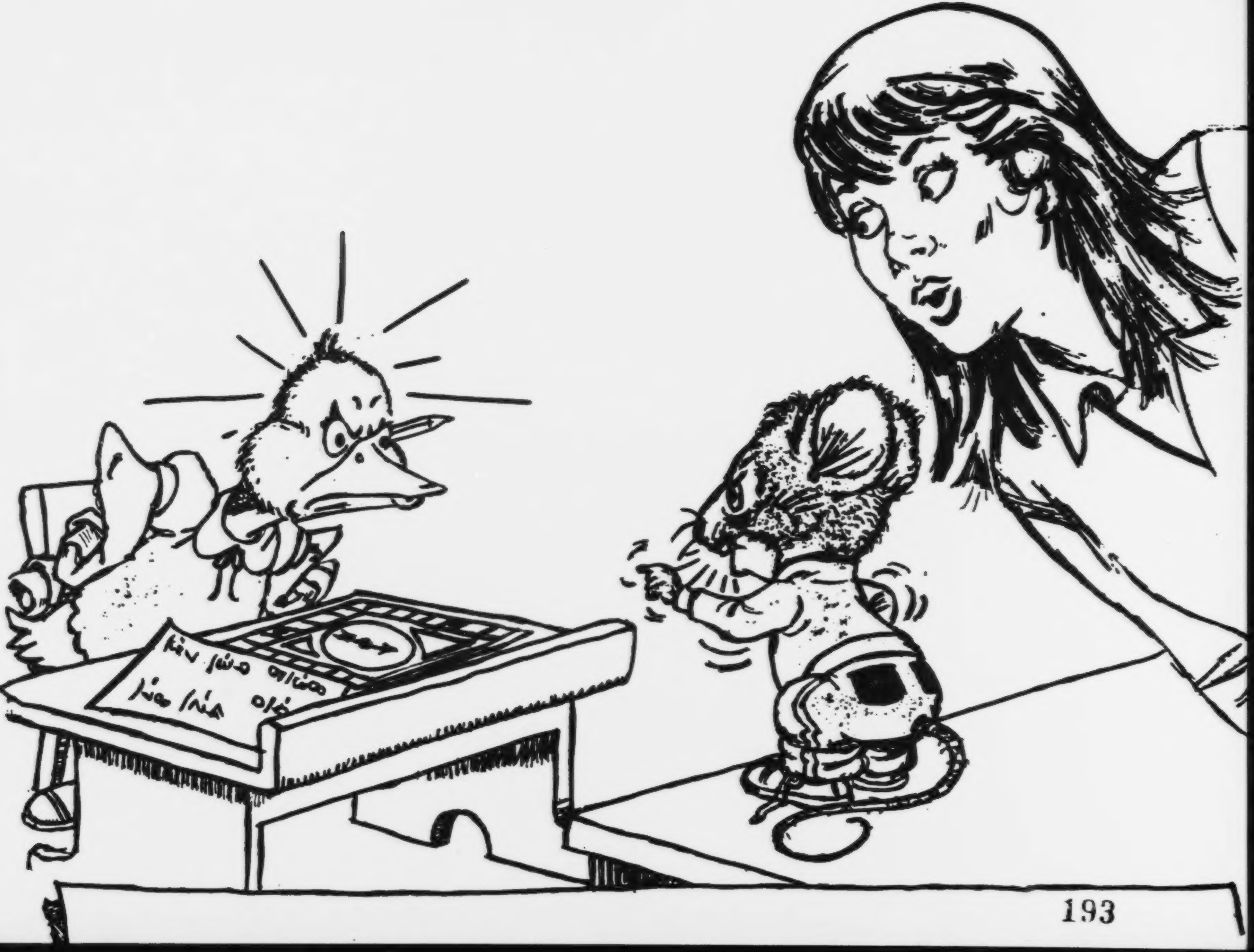
Take a variety of pictures of people interacting around the school. Subjects may be adults or other students. Ask the students to choose a picture about which to write. Discuss how the students might add conversation to the picture to communicate what might have been happening when the picture was taken. The conversation may reflect what was actually happening; or the students may make up a situation, serious or humorous, to fit the picture. The teacher can review briefly previous lessons on the punctuation of dialogue.

Have the students work alone or in pairs to write a conversation between the people in the pictures. The teacher should be available to help the students brainstorm about the events that might be occurring in their pictures. Have the students share their first-draft conversations with others in the class so that they might receive information about how well the dialogue fits the action in the picture and how clearly it communicates to a reader. The students should use this information to rewrite their dialogues. This cycle may be repeated several times until the students are satisfied with the content of their conversations.

Independent Practice Prompt

Now that the students have learned about expressive/narrative writing and have demonstrated mastery in guided practice, they are ready to be assessed on a sample prompt item.

Instruct students to: "Pretend you walked in on this conversation. Write a story about what happened."



Objective 10: Write a composition in which two or more ideas/objects/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.

Grade 5

This objective requires students to write an informative/classificatory composition in which ideas/objects/places are grouped according to their attributes and described.

Instructional Emphases

The key to classificatory writing is the clarity of the organizational strategy. No one strategy is viewed as preferable when writing in a classificatory mode, however, planning is essential. The writer must determine how he/she will group the attributes and must maintain this classification scheme throughout the response. Students' repeated experiences with constructive classification systems through the cognitive skill of analysis, are essential in ensuring mastery of this objective.

Possible Instructional Strategies

To Buy...or Not to Buy

Students should work in pairs for this activity. Each pair identifies a hypothetical item to be purchased. One student writes what is good about the item, while the second student writes what is bad about the item. Both students present their reasons orally to the class. The class decides which reasons are the most convincing.

Job Hunt

Discuss with students various jobs they might have. Write these on the chalkboard. How often are these jobs done - daily, monthly, once a year, or as often as needed? Is it a "paid" job? Discuss the pleasant and unpleasant features about each job. Stress words like "responsibility," "errands," "unpleasant," "duty," and so on.

Have students select a job and describe its good and bad points. On the following day, pass out the papers to different students and have them identify any additional points necessary. If clarification is needed have students circle the unclear word. Ask the reader to sign the paper and return it to the original writer. Allow the partners to discuss the suggested changes. Let volunteers read their descriptions to the class.

Hot or Cold

Discuss with students climates around the world. Have students who have lived in warm climates share their experiences with the class. Then have students who have lived in cold climates do the same.

As this discussion is taking place, have a student list attributes of each climate on the board. Discuss possible strategies for organizing a composition to include these attributes. Have students select one of the strategies and write an informative/classificatory composition. Other topics which can be discussed in later lessons using this strategy are:

living in the city - living in the country
living in a house - living in an apartment
having brothers and sisters - being an only child
being the youngest child in the family - being the oldest child in the family

Objective 11: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.
Grade 5

This objective requires students to write a persuasive/ descriptive composition in which reasons are presented to convince the designated audience of the writer's point of view.

Instructional Emphases

There are several key elements necessary in persuasive writing. Ideas must be presented in a concise, convincing manner and must be elaborated to the degree needed to prove the writer's points. The reasons must be appropriate for the specified audience. Planning is essential to ensure cogency and a logical progression of ideas.

Possible Instructional Strategies

Coupons

Discuss how a person is persuaded by a coupon. Brainstorm the design of a coupon (i.e., colors, pictures, discount) and what information is necessary (i.e., expiration date, company, name of product). Distribute actual coupons for examples. Discuss and brainstorm what sells a product such as cereal (i.e., minerals, vitamins, natural ingredients, low sugar, or an unusual name).

Have the students suggest an original name that will help sell a new cereal. Ask them to design a coupon and write a persuasive letter to accompany it. Remind the students that the letter must try to convince the consumer of the benefits of this new breakfast product so that the public will want to buy the cereal.

On the next day, redistribute the coupons and letters to groups of two students. Have them proofread each other's letter and suggest ways to improve the advertisement. Display the finished products on the bulletin board.

Ad Lib

Show the class samples of newspaper ads. Discuss why advertisements are helpful to consumers. Study the persuasive elements of the ads. Point out, for example, that the words "attractive" and "high-quality" are persuasive descriptions in the phrase "an attractive ten-speed bike of high-quality materials"; explain that the other words are merely informative. Assist the class in developing a model ad about a bicycle.

Ask each student to write an advertisement for a product or service (e.g., stereo sets or comic books; babysitting or lawn mowing). Remind the students to use persuasive descriptions to sell their chosen product or service.

Have the students read and comment on the ads. Suggest that illustrations be included. Display the ads on the bulletin board.

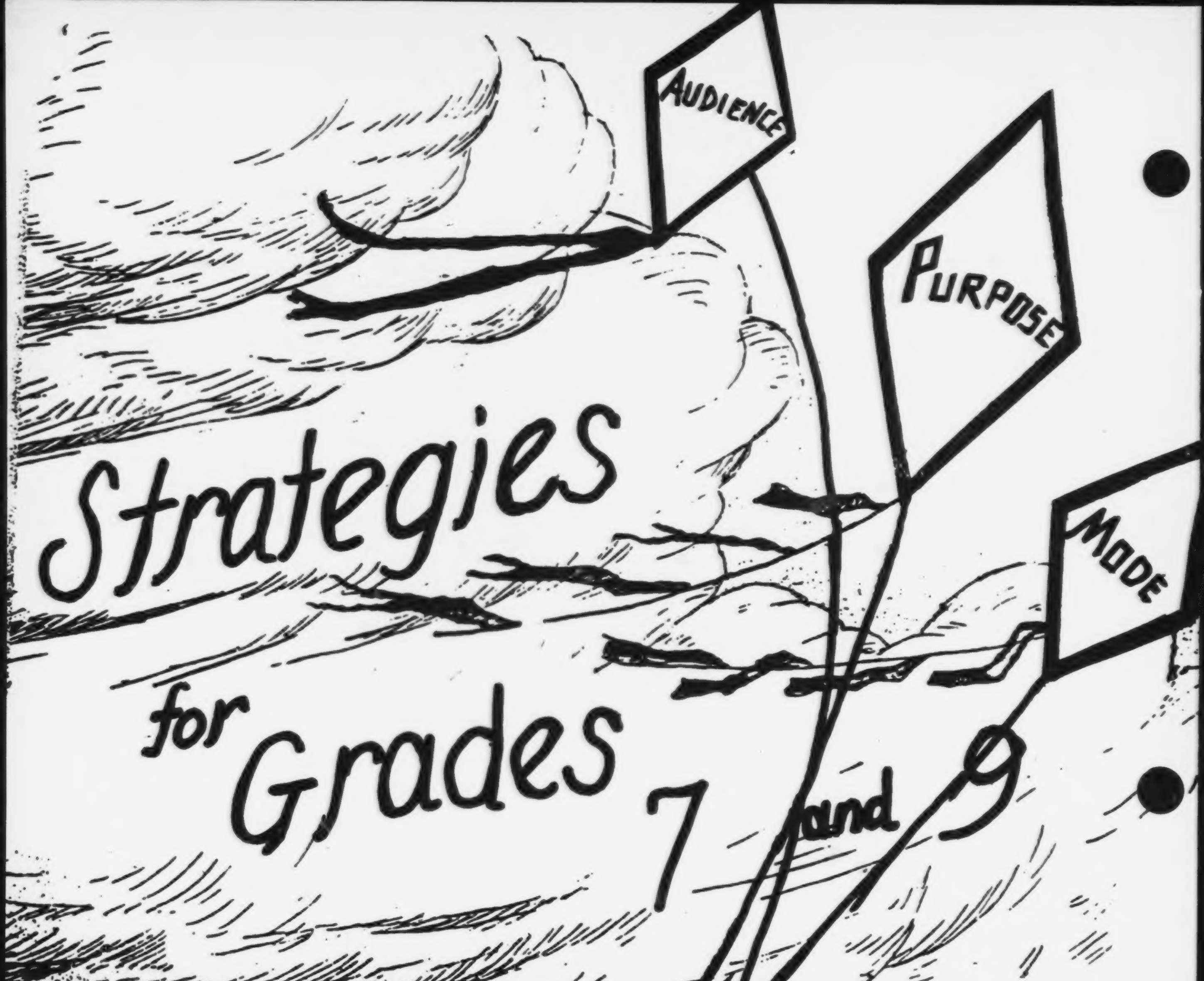
A Skunk in the House?

Discuss the meaning of persuasion with the class. Point out that children often employ a variety of techniques when attempting to persuade their parents to change their point of view (such as flattery, begging, tantrums, promises, or tears). Develop with the group the name and address of a fictitious summer camp to be used in the assignment. Review the standard friendly letter form.

Ask the students to write a letter to their parents. Remind them to be as persuasive as possible to convince their parents to permit them to bring home a pet skunk. Direct the students to develop at least three convincing reasons why they should be allowed to do this. Encourage students to use description.

Let volunteers read their letters to the class. Elicit comments about the arguments offered by asking, "Would they work?"

Strategies for Grades 7 and 9


AUDIENCE
PURPOSE
MODE

PART IV

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR GRADES 7 AND 9

Objective 7: Write a composition to describe an object or picture.
Grades 7 and 9

This objective requires students to write an informative/ descriptive composition in which an object or picture is described in a specific and organized manner to allow the reader to visualize this object or picture in his/her mind.

Instructional Emphases

The key element to vivid description is specificity. This specificity can be achieved through precise words, rich detail, referential comparisons, and words that indicate location. Prewriting planning is essential to the production of good description. No one organizational strategy is preferable however, the writer must decide prior to beginning whether he/she will describe by focusing on all elements of a type and describing those before describing something else or by describing through location.

For example, in a seascape, one could describe the water, the seagulls, the dunes, and the beachcombers or one could begin with the water in the background and then describe the dunes, the gulls and the beachcombers in the foreground.

Possible Instructional Activities

Ten-Word Character Sketch

Build a bank of descriptive "personality" words on the board, such as curious, generous, cheerful, athletic, temperamental, unpredictable, stubborn, talkative, leader, follower, loner, grouch, and pacesetter. Discuss briefly the meaning of each word. Explain that single words can be used to pinpoint personal characteristics. Using ten words create a "character sketch" of yourself (the teacher).

Instruct the students to choose ten words that relate to the kind of person they are. Tell the students to exchange papers with another student who will then describe the partner in ten different words, and to cite specific examples of the traits. Encourage the students to recognize the best in themselves and others.

Let volunteers read their own descriptions aloud to the class. Ask the class to compare the two descriptions of each person. Allow students to make further positive comments about the person being discussed.

Identity Clues

Talk with the students about how they might describe certain objects in the room. Next discuss how they might describe another person in the room or in the school. Give them an example by describing someone who works at the school and have the students try to guess the person described. As the students guess the correct identity, ask what clues helped them to determine who was being described. List these clues on the board. Give the students some time to describe someone either in the room or who works at the school for the other classmates to guess.

Next place some fictitious topics on the board such as "A Visitor From Outer Space," "The Person You Will Marry," or "Pecos Bill." Have students create descriptions about these topics or characters.

Use this activity on other occasions to elicit descriptions of current political figures. Have students read magazine and newspaper articles about their chosen individual before attempting their description.

My Best Friend

With the students, make a list on the board of adjectives which describe friends. Ask for ideas that tell what friends share. Discuss the questions, "What is a friend?", "What do you share with your friend?", "Who is your friend?"

Have the students write a paragraph about their best friend. Encourage the students to use words from the word bank on the board and from the discussion as well as their own ideas and feelings.

Have students read their papers to the class. As the class listens to the ideas presented, they can add ideas to their own papers. Then post papers around the word "FRIENDS."

Name That Scene

Have each student bring to class two scenes that are similar, but not identical. Have the student describe one of the scenes in explicit detail so that other students will be able to choose the scene that has been described.

The Moral of the Story

Expose students to pictures of Aesop's Fables. Selecting one at a time, have students describe what they see in the picture. Describe the characters and the situation of that fable. Have students create a moral of the fable based on their descriptions.

Wanted Posters

Obtain some old "wanted posters" from the post office. Discuss the pictures and their descriptions with class. Exhibit one picture and allow the students to describe it. See how close they come to the actual printed description.

Let students create their own characters. Tell them to jot down their verbal description for a character, then create a drawing from the description. Make sure they understand that their drawing must follow the description. Remind them, for example, that if they say the criminal has a patch over his left eye, they cannot draw it over the right eye.

Have the students pair off and analyze each other's work for additions and/or improvements. Emphasize that the general public should be able to recognize this criminal from the verbal description.

Visitor from Outer Space

Ask the students to imagine that they are walking home from school and that they see an alien creature from outer space. Develop elaborated descriptions on the board about such a creature. Read the descriptions elicited from the students as they model or sketch them into a wanted poster.

Ask the students to create a wanted poster with a picture and the most important details about the alien. Encourage the students to use accurate descriptions and not to leave out any important details. Assist the students in choosing the most appropriate words to describe what they have seen.

Using Your Senses

Discuss with the students various common objects in the classroom. Ask the students to describe orally the color, size, shape, and texture of these objects. Write on the board descriptive sentence clues of one sample object.

Ask the students to select any object and write 10 sentences that describe it or compare its outstanding features to similar things. Remind students that the clues should help their classmates picture the item in their mind but should not reveal the item's identity.

In My Room

Discuss a visitor's first impression of various rooms in the school (the classroom, the principal's office, the cafeteria, etc.). Brainstorm with students a list of descriptive words (such as "terrifying," "repulsive," "reassuring," "invigorating," etc.) that characterize each setting and provide specific examples of these traits. Write the descriptive words that the class generated on colored construction paper. Develop a model paragraph about one room in the school by beginning with a general mood (topic sentence) and following through with specific details (developmental sentences).

Ask the students to describe a room at home by starting with the overall impression and continuing with the supporting details. Remind them to use the descriptive terms in the class word bank or add other appropriate expressions. Circulate around the room and monitor student progress.

On the following day, let the class examine several finished papers by using an opaque projector or by reading them aloud. Have students check for effectiveness of descriptive words.

Descriptions Anyone?

Lead a class discussion about blind people with questions such as, "What do you think it would be like being blind?", "How would you know what something looked like?" If any of the students have ever known or been with a blind person, encourage them to share the experience.

Channel the discussion to how the students would describe something for a blind person so the blind person could "see" an object. Practice giving vivid descriptions of objects around the classroom.

Show a picture to the class and urge the students to look at it carefully. Distribute rough draft paper and have the students write a detailed description of the picture for a blind person or someone who's never seen the picture so that they too can "see" the object.

Let the pupils form groups of three and review their descriptions. As each group member reads a description, the others close their eyes and listen. The two listeners suggest additions to the drafts to make them more descriptive and tell where the revised wording belongs. The authors write the suggestions on their papers in the designated areas.

Select several descriptions to read to a blindfolded volunteer. Let the volunteer tell which aspects of the descriptions help to create a "mind image." The volunteer might also draw a picture based upon the description.

Objective 8: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Grades 7 and 9

This objective requires students to write an informative/ narrative composition in which a sequence of events that tells how to do something is related.

Instructional Emphases

The logical sequencing of steps to perform tasks is the key element of this type of writing. These steps must provide the necessary information to another individual so that this person can replicate the task. Practical applications for this type of writing are numerous at the secondary level, e.g., laboratory reports for biology or chemistry, instructions for the use of equipment in industrial arts, home economics, art, driver education, and office education classes.

Possible Instructional Strategies

Step by Step

Have students select one of the following "how to" topics:

- start a car
- go from one place in school to another
- use a vending machine
- perform a simple science experiment
- travel from point A to point B using a road map

Each student should write a composition in which the chosen process is explained. The writer should read aloud his composition to the class while another student attempts to replicate the process. Class discussion should take place during each of these demonstrations.

Lab Write-Ups

As part of a science project which has been coordinated with the science teacher, ask each student to bring to class notes from science class which contain the steps needed to perform a science experiment. Have students write compositions incorporating these notes that describe how to perform the experiment. Have other students attempt to replicate the experiment in science class and report back the degree of success attained.

Objective 9: Write a composition which explains the likenesses and differences or the advantages and disadvantages of two simple ideas/objects/places.
Grade 7

Objective 9: Write a composition in which two or more ideas/objects/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.
Grade 9

These objectives require students to write an informative/classificatory composition in which ideas/objects/places are grouped according to their attributes and described.

Instructional Emphases

Clarity of the organizational strategy is the key element to effective writing in the classificatory mode. Prewriting planning is essential to ensure that the writer has analyzed how to group the attributes about which information is to be provided and that the writer is consistent in the use of the selected strategy throughout the response.

Views and Opinions

Tell students they will have an opportunity to present their views and opinions on an issue. Point out that they must argue both sides of an issue in writing. Allow students to pick their own topic or to choose from a list of topics such as:

- househusbands
- cheating in school
- dating at age 10
- women's liberation
- curfew hours
- dress codes

Have students list the pros and cons of their argument on scratch paper before writing.

Direct the students to write a balanced paper giving both sides of an issue. Explain that they must write "Pro" on one side of the paper and "Con" on the other side. Help individuals who need assistance.

Pair off students so they can proofread each other's paper. Return the essays to their owners. Allow students to rewrite and share their revised version with the class.

Bubbles Everywhere

Point out that school policy prohibits chewing gum in class. Discuss this policy briefly with the students. Talk about the feelings of the students when caught, scolded, or punished, and made to throw the gum away. Brainstorm a list of reasons why this is a good rule and a second list of reasons why it is not considered a good rule. Encourage them to express their opinions. Ask students to write a composition in which both the good and bad points of the rule are presented.

Divide the class into small groups to read and comment on the papers. Encourage the groups to discuss the language and vocabulary used and to comment on the merits of the content.

Rules, Rules

Conduct a class discussion of some of the school rules -- both those that are controversial and those that are not. Ask students to suggest reasons for and against each rule. Ask students to view the pros and cons from both the student's and the administration's point of view. Select one of the discussed rules. Ask half of the class to write a composition explaining the pros and cons of the rule from the student's point of view and ask the other half to write from the administration's point of view. Have students read aloud their compositions and discuss them.

Taste and Tell

Ask the students to express their opinions about snack foods they have tasted. Insist that they tell their own personal reasons why they liked or disliked any item. Classify foods into the following taste categories: sweet, tart, spicy, creamy and salty.

Discuss and write on the board other classification schemes for these snack foods. Highlight and discuss the fact that these foods will likely be placed in different categories as the classification schemes are changed.

Objective 10: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented. Grades 7 and 9

This objective requires students to write a persuasive/descriptive composition in which reasons are presented to convince the designated audience of the writer's point of view.

Instructional Emphases

The key elements of persuasive writing are the presentation of cogent reasons and the tailoring of these reasons for the intended audience, whether formal, as in a letter to the principal or in a newspaper editorial, or informal, as in a letter to a friend.

Gummy Issue

Point out that school policy prohibits chewing gum in class. Discuss the policy briefly with the students. Talk about the feelings of the students when caught, scolded, or punished, and made to throw the gum away. Brainstorm a list of reasons why this is a good rule and a second list of reasons why it is not considered a good rule. Encourage them to express their opinions.

Ask the students to consider how they feel about the anti-gum policy. Tell the students to write a memorandum to the principal explaining their position for or against the rule. Insist that they give two or more reasons supporting their stand.

Divide the class into small groups to read and comment on the papers. Encourage the groups to discuss the language and vocabulary used and to comment on the merits of the content.

Used Car, Anyone?

Study several examples of classified ads and discuss what they contain. Emphasize that an ad usually begins with an identification of the product, followed by a list of details that would be of interest to a buyer. Point out that the selling price, address, and phone number are often the last details mentioned. Brainstorm with the class a list of advantages in buying a used car. Also develop a word bank of ways to describe some of the outstanding features of used cars for sale.

Ask the students to write an advertisement about a used car for a newspaper. Remind the students that they must carefully choose the most persuasive descriptions they can think of when writing their ad. Insist that they create a sales slogan or at least state one good reason why someone should buy a used car.

Ask a few students to read their advertisements in class. Post the revised classified ads on the bulletin board. Let the students vote for the three most persuasive want ads.

Tune In

Play a modern song that is not widely known. Discuss the process of a record becoming a top hit. Bring out the point that a new song must sometimes get an introduction on a major radio station to begin to sell in music stores.

Have students write a list of features that help promote a record. Put a model letter on a poster to illustrate the parts of a business letter. Ask the students to write a letter to a disc jockey to persuade the DJ to play this new song.

Stuff for Sale

Discuss with the class the procedures one may wish to follow in order to sell something: highlight good features, do not emphasize bad features, gear the reasons to buy the item toward a potential buyer. Have students select an article to be sold, e.g., bicycle, car, boat, or stereo. Ask them to write a letter to an out-of-town buyer convincing this individual to buy the item. Have students read aloud their letters and encourage constructive comments from fellow classmates.

D.D.T.

Divide the students into small groups and have them read the following directions from the board or an overhead transparency.

> "D.D.T. is an insect killing chemical. Some people feel it should be used. Others think it should not be used. You have some facts about D.D.T. Divide the list into two parts. In one part, list those facts which support the use of D.D.T. In the other part, list the facts used by people who are against the use of D.D.T. As a group write a summary for one set of reasons."

Then give each group the following handout:

1. D.D.T. is the best insect killer we have.
2. D.D.T. is a poison forever.
3. D.D.T. is easy to use in liquid and powder forms.
4. D.D.T. can be stored in human and animal bodies.
5. D.D.T. is harmless to crops when used properly.
6. D.D.T. may have bad effects on us in the coming years.
7. D.D.T. is in some foods we eat.
8. D.D.T. has helped us raise larger and better crops because insects are controlled and don't damage plants.
9. D.D.T. protects us from invasion by insects.
10. D.D.T. interferes with the ability of some birds to raise their young.
11. Our government has banned the use of D.D.T.
12. The government ban may be tested in the courts because some people are in favor of using D.D.T.

The groups should divide the statements into pro and con D.D.T. Next they need to take a vote and determine whether the majority of their group is for or against the use of D.D.T. Whichever way the majority votes, the task of each group is to write a summary statement of their position using the statements and any additional information they may feel is important.

See if there is a consensus about which statements support which side of the D.D.T. issue.

Objective 11: Write a composition which discusses two opposing courses of action and is designed to convince a specified audience to follow one of those courses.
Grade 9

This objective requires students to write a persuasive/classificatory composition to convince the reader of the writer's position by stating logical, emotional, or personal reasons, by comparing and contrasting, by indicating advantages and disadvantages, or by highlighting good and bad qualities.

Instructional Emphases

The key element in persuasive/classificatory writing is convincing a designated audience of the writer's point of view by presenting pros and cons of the issue while providing support for the stated position. Prewriting planning is essential so the writer can outline his/her strategy, making certain that each reason supports the position.

Media Madness

The students will discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of the advertisement media: radio versus television. Divide the class into three groups: T.V. advertising agents, radio advertising agents, and business persons who need to advertise their product. The business group must make a decision whether they will advertise by radio or T.V. The goal of the T.V. and radio agents is to persuade the business people to advertise through their medium. They must give the advantages of their medium and the disadvantages of the opposing medium. Therefore, one group will give the advantages of advertising by radio and the disadvantages of advertising by T.V. The other group will give the advantages of advertising by T.V. and the disadvantages of doing so by radio. Finally, the business persons will secretly offer a contract to the T.V. or radio agents. When all contracts have been completed, open them and distribute them to the respective team. Whoever receives the most contracts had the most convincing position.

Vending Machines

Discuss the possibility of the school purchasing vending machines for the cafeteria. One group of school board members wants students to have health foods available. An opposing group feels that since nourishing lunches are available, the vending machines should contain "junk food snacks."

Solicit oral responses on the pros and cons of both options. With students write a composition which elaborates on both sets of pros and cons. The students will, by majority vote, decide on a class position.